Great Britain and the Soviet Union: The Supply of Munitions, 1941 - 1945.

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GREAT BRITAIN AND THE SOVIET UNION:

THE SUPPLY OF MUNITIONS,

1941-1945

by

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ABSTRACT

The supply of munitions from Great Britain to the Soviet Union is a remarkable episode in the history of World War II. The two countries concerned had been estranged for much of the inter-war period, but when in 1941 the German armed forces attacked the Soviet Union, Britain made an immediate response. Her own military weakness was great, and the objections of her Service departments to offering supplies were loud; but despite this the government limited Britain's offensive power for the sake of Soviet resistance. Even more remarkably it continued with this policy after the Japanese attacked with humiliating results for the British empire in the Far East. The strategic situation had changed - and was to change even more with Soviet recovery in 1943 - but the supply of munitions continued. At no time were the Russians asked to justify their demands, and until the war in Europe ended the British delivered supplies to the limit of their ability.

This unusual situation arose because Soviet belligerence was central to Britain's strategy for defeating Germany. Even in 1941, when the Red Army suffered huge losses, the Eastern campaign offered strategic advantages to the British. They had at all costs to support the resistance the Red Army offered. But such was British weakness at this time that they could not offer aid by invading the continent of Europe. They had instead to offer supplies, and, given the importance of boosting Russian morale and dulling Soviet suspicions of the West, offer them uncritically.

Later, when military circumstances had changed, political considerations ensured the programme continued in this form. Britain's ability to offer munitions was much reduced in later years of the war; and her efforts were almost totally eclipsed by those of the United States of America. But the termination of British aid to the Soviet Union was not considered. Such an action would have diminished British standing in the three-Power alliance, since the United States continued to provide supplies uncritically. It would also have jeopardized the association with Moscow which was vital to the defeat of Germany and the construction of a lasting peace. Britain, therefore, strained by manpower shortages and financial difficulties, continued the programme of supply which had been created to meet a vastly different military situation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

This list does not include the code names used for particular series of telegrams, nor those used for particular Allied conferences.

A/A	anti-aircraft
ACIGS	Assistant Chief of the Imperial General Staff
Admy	Admiralty
Air Whit	Air Ministry, Whitehall
AM	Air Ministry
A/M	anti-magnetic
AMSO	Air Member for Supply and Organization
A.S.E.	Allied Supplies Executive
A/T	anti-tank
BAD	British Admiralty Delegation, Washington
BB papers	Beaverbrook papers, Beaverbrook Library
Br	British
CAS	Chief of Air Staff
CAS	Committee for Co-ordination of Allied Supplies
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
C.I.G.S.	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
COS	Chiefs of Staff
C.S.A.B.	Combined Shipping Adjustment Board
DAFV	Director of Armoured Fighting Vehicles
DBFP	Documents on British Foreign Policy
DGFP	Documents on German Foreign Policy
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence
DMO	Director of Military Operations
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence
DO	Defence Committee
DWO	Director of War Organisation
FA	Foreign Affairs
1st L	First Lord of the Admiralty
1st SL	First Sea Lord
FNP	Former Naval Person (Churchill's code name)
FO	Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
FS	Foreign Secretary
HIWR	Home Intelligence Weekly Report
HMR	His Majesty's Representative

JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JP	Joint Planners
JSM	Joint Staff Mission
MAB	Munitions Assignment Board
MAP	Ministry of Aircraft Production
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
MOP	Ministry of Production
M/S	mine-sweeping
M/Supply	Ministry of Supply
M/T	motor transport
MWT	Ministry of War Transport
NAS	North American Supply Committee
OLLA	Office of Lend-Lease Administration
Ops	Operations
PM	Prime Minister
Pres	President of the United States
R.A.F.	Royal Air Force
RAFDEL	Royal Air Force Delegation, Washington
SBNO	Senior British Naval Officer
SOS	Secretary of State
STD	Soviet Trade Delegation
30 MM	Number 30 Military Mission, Moscow
UKCC	United Kingdom Commercial Corporation
UK-S(Sh)	Anglo-Soviet Shipping Committee
U.S.A.A.F.	United States Army Air Forces
U/SOS	Under Secretary of State
VCAS	Vice Chief of Air Staff
VCNS	Vice Chief of Naval Staff
WCO	War Cabinet Offices
WO	War Office
WSA	War Shipping Administration
W'ton	Washington

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On 22 June 1941 Adolf Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich, attacked the Soviet Union with the mightiest military force concentrated on a single theatre of war in history.[1] This was the consummation of his political career. From his earliest days in public life he had declared his intention to be 'the destroyer of Marxism'[2] and the conqueror of Lebensraum for the German nation in the East.[3] 'Nationalism, anti-Bolshevism, and anti- Semitism . . . formed the pillars of his world view'[4] and Moscow, centre of Bolshevism and of the Jewish world conspiracy, remained his ultimate goal. Faced with British support for Poland in 1939 he was obliged to seek a tactical alliance with the Kremlin, but he saw this as 'a breach with my whole background, my views, and my former obligations'.[5] 'The conflict with Bolshevism' remained his 'great and proper task'.[6]

Attacking the Soviet Union in 1941, however, involved Hitler in a war on two fronts, the incubus of German strategy. The British nation would not admit defeat, despite the fall of its ally, France, in June 1940. Hitler had therefore to justify his attack on the Soviet Union as a means of weakening England further. He told his generals on 31 July 1940,

> England's hope is Russia and America. If the hope of Russia is eliminated, America is eliminated also, because the elimination of Russia will be followed by an enormous increase in the importance of Japan in the Far East . . . if Russia is smashed, England's last hope is wiped out. Then Germany is master of Europe and of the Balkans.[7]

Almost certainly, given Hitler's ideological obsessions, these words were 'mere strategic rationalizations'[8] intended

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1 J. C. Fest, Hitler (London, 1973), p. 648.
2 A. Bullock, Hitler, A Study in Tyranny (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1971), p. 117.
3 Bullock, p. 316-7.
4 Fest, p. 206.
5 Ibid, p. 647.
6 Ibid, p. 641.
7 Ibid.
8 B. A. Leach, German Strategy against Russia 1939-1941 (Oxford, 1973), p. 84.

to calm apprehensive generals. Indeed, if Hitler had meant them seriously, he was to be bitterly disappointed. For his attack on the Soviet Union did not eliminate with one blow Britain's 'last hope' for resistance. On the contrary it involved the German nation in a protracted war of attrition, and provoked the alliance between East and West which Germany had always feared. For the Wehrmacht, though crowned with the triumphs of Blitzkrieg in Europe, did not destroy the Red Army in a matter of weeks; and Great Britain and the Soviet Union, faced with a common threat to their survival, embraced each other. In one of the most ironic volte-faces of modern politics the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, offered support to the Russians. Without hesitation he extended to them economic and military assistance, though his own country's forces were desperately short of munitions. Characteristically he ignored the pessimism of his generals who, like their German counterparts, scorned the Red Army's fighting ability. He surmounted his old antipathy to Communism and led Great Britain into an alliance of Powers which, with the support of the United States of America, ensured the ultimate destruction of Hitler's Reich.

In the circumstances of 1941 such an alliance was not unexpected - each country's need of the other was so great as to make tactical co-operation at least a necessity. Nonetheless the wholeheartedness with which Britain supported the Soviet Union straight after the German attack is remarkable; for Anglo-Soviet relations in the past - as Hitler had known to his advantage - had not been characterized by generosity and sacrifice. Rather they had been marred by recrimination, misunderstanding and mistrust. Britain had sought to destroy the Communist state in its infancy by supporting those anti-Bolshevik forces which it hoped would bring Russia back into the First World War. In 1918 British troops had occupied the Caucasian oil fields and the Northern ports of Murmansk and Archangel, and Britain had led the Allied Governments in supplying aid to White Russian forces.[1] This created a legacy of suspicion which the Russians for their part did little to dispel in the following years. Their habit in the early 1920s of viewing the Communist International as their main instrument of diplomacy disturbed the British, particularly when its activities

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1 S. Shapiro, 'Intervention in Russia (1918-1919)' in U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, vol. XCIX, no. 4 (1973), pp. 52-61.

extended to China and the traditional areas of Anglo-Russian rivalry, India, Afghanistan and Persia.[1]

Hence, though a trade agreement was negotiated between the two countries in 1921, relations remained cool, especially while Lord Curzon, with the sensitivity to Russian threats of an ex-Viceroy of India, remained at the Foreign Office.[2] Not until 1924, with the election of the first Labour government, did Britain accord de jure recognition to the Soviet government. Then the rapprochement was shortlived, for the publication of the 'Zinoviev letter' in late 1924 swept another Conservative government into power.[3] Although the Russians insisted that this letter from the Comintern urging the British Communist party to 'paralyse all the military preparations of the bourgeoisie'[4] was a forgery, Stanley Baldwin's government refused to ratify the agreement negotiated by Ramsay MacDonald for a loan to the Soviet Union. The strained relations which resulted were finally broken in 1927 when the British high-handedly raided the premises of the Soviet trading organization in London, and claimed to find there documents proving Soviet intrigues against the British Empire.[5] Once again, it was not until a Labour government came to power, in 1929, that diplomatic relations were re-established. Five more years passed before trading relations were consolidated in an agreement involving mutual tariff reductions and undertakings to purchase.

These formal links notwithstanding, Britain and the Soviet Union remained estranged for much of the 1930s. This was because they failed to reach agreement on how they, as countries on the borders of Europe, should respond to the growing power and aggression of Germany. The Russians, who had been linked to Germany in the 1920s by the shared sense of exclusion from the European community, were quick to sense the menace of Nazism. Hitler's rise to power wrought radical changes in their foreign policy,

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1 E. H. Carr, International Relations between the two World Wars (Hong Kong, 1967), pp. 74, 157.
2 For Curzon's 'ultimatum' to the Soviet government over their activities in Persia, Afghanistan and India see L. Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, vol. 1 (London, 1930), pp. 435-50.
3 D. Thomson, Europe since Napoleon (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1966), p. 667.
4 Fischer, vol. II, (1930), p. 493.
5 Ibid, pp. 688-9.

forcing them to make non-aggression pacts with their neighbours,[1] espouse collective security through the League of Nations and seek rapport with France. From Britain, however, they were progressively alienated by her attempts to find her own modus vivendi with Germany. The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, limiting German naval strength to 35 per cent of that of Britain, 'intensely disturbed' the Soviet Foreign Minister, Maxim Litvinov. He saw it as an attempt by the British 'blacklegs' to break the chain of armed states which he believed could alone contain Germany.[2] He was no more impressed with later British responses to Fascist breaches of the peace - their espousal of the doctrine of non-intervention during the Spanish Civil War, the abortive Hoare-Laval Pact surrendering large parts of Abyssinia to the Italian aggressor, and the failure to act when the Germans reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936. For their part the British were suspicious of Soviet intentions,[3] particularly in arming the Republicans in Spain, but the Kremlin apparently concluded that London would tolerate German growth so long as it did not challenge British interests. Increasingly, it seems, Moscow came to suspect that, rather than oppose the dictators with force, the British would deflect their ambitions to the east.

The events of 1938 did little to blunt this suspicion. After the incorporation of Austria into the German Reich, the Soviet government proposed measures 'for the collective saving of peace';[4] but the British and French governments remained cautious.[5] They had been repelled by the ferocity of the purge which Stalin had launched in 1936, and believed that the elimination of between one quarter and one half of the officers of the Soviet armed forces,[6] including the brilliant chief of the general staff, Marshal Tukhachevsky, had made the Soviet Union useless as an ally. They therefore excluded the Russians from the negotiations about Czechoslovakia which culminated in the cession to Germany of the Sudetenland in the Munich agreement of 29 September 1938.

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1 J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (London, 1948), pp. 273-4.
2 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1935, I (Washington, 1953), p. 168.
3 A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), pp. 161-2.
4 Taylor, p. 196.
5 M. Gilbert, The European Powers 1900-45 (London, 1965), p. 131.
6 J. Erickson, The Soviet High Command 1918-1941 (London, 1962), p. 506.

This exclusion mortified the Russians. They claimed, apparently in all sincerity,[1] that, had France honoured her obligations to the Czechs, they too would have met their commitments under the associated Soviet-Czechoslovak alliance of 1935. Whether they would have done so, or whether they would have even acted alone without the French, is impossible to say.[2] There are several reasons to think not - the Polish and Romanian governments' refusal to allow the Red Army transit through their territory,[3] the reluctance of the Czechs to appeal to the Russians alone,[4] and the understandable fear on the Russians' part that they and the Czechs might face Germany unaided. Nonetheless, the deliberate exclusion of the Russians from the negotiations with Hitler, and in particular the failure by the French to respond to the Russian suggestion of staff talks,[5] aggravated Soviet suspicions of the West. 'One might think,' Stalin said a few months later, 'that the districts of Czechoslovakia were yielded to Germany as the prize for her undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union.'[6]

The harvest of these suspicions was reaped by the British in 1939. When, after the Wehrmacht invaded Bohemia and Moravia on 15 March, and the British approached the Russians on the question of assisting Romania,[7] supposedly the next victim,[8] their approach foundered on misunderstanding and mistrust. The Russians suggested a six-power conference including France, Britain, themselves and

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1 W. V. Wallace, 'New Documents on the History of Munich' in International Affairs, vol. 35 (October, 1959), pp. 453. Wallace quotes a dispatch from the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Moscow of 17 Sept. 1938, declaring his conviction of Soviet sincerity.

2 K. Robbins, Munich 1938 (London, 1968). In footnote no. 419 Robbins concludes that until Soviet archives are open the question of Soviet intentions is insoluble.

3 F. Vnuk,'Munich and the Soviet Union' in Journal of Central European Affairs,vol. 21 (October, 1961), p. 289.

4. D. Vital, 'Czechoslovakia and the Powers' in Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 1 (October, 1966), p. 39.

5 Wallace, p. 453.

6 I. Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1970), pp. 417-18.

7 Sir W. Seeds (Moscow) to Lord Halifax, 18 Mar. 1939 in E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds), Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 (hereafter DBFP), third series, vol. IV, (London, 1951), no. 403.

8 The reliability of the information the Foreign Office received from the Romanian Minister in London about a German economic ultimatum to Romania has since been seriously questioned. Nonetheless, the British did have military reports suggesting an offensive German concentration against Romania. S. Aster, 1939: The Making of the Second World War (London, 1973), pp. 69-74.

the lesser powers, Turkey, Romania and Poland,[1] but the British thought this premature.[2] They in turn proposed a four-power declaration - excluding Turkey and Romania - of their intention to enter conversations on steps required to meet the threat to the peace of Europe.[3] They later dropped this, however, in deference to Polish objections to being associated with the Russians and the hostility of other countries, among them Japan, Spain, Portugal, and Canada.[4] A month passed, during which the British guaranteed the independence of Poland, Romania and Greece, before the Russians swept aside a suggestion that they unilaterally guarantee any Eastern European state that wished assistance,[5] and suggested instead a triple alliance of mutual assistance against aggression.[6]

Again the British raised objections. Both the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, distrusted Russian motives,[7] and they had been advised by their Chiefs of Staff that 'any substantial Russian military support to Poland is out of the question'.[8] It was therefore not until 24 May, almost five weeks after the Russian offer, that the Cabinet, confronted with rumours of German-Soviet negotiations, agreed to an alliance with the Russians.[9] By this time their dilatoriness had apparently raised doubts in Moscow about their sincerity, and these doubts were enhanced in June by the British failure to send a high-ranking minister to continue the discussions in Moscow and by the lack of urgency in the despatch of British and French military missions in July.[10] When the

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1 Seeds to Halifax, 19 Mar. 1939, DBFP, IV, no. 421.

2 Halifax to Seeds, 19 Mar. 1939, DBFP, IV, no. 433.

3 Halifax to Sir E. Phipps (Paris), Sir W. Seeds (Moscow) and Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw), 20 Mar. 1939, DBFP, IV, no. 446.

4 Halifax to Kennard, 24 Mar. 1939, DBFP, IV, no. 518; Aster, p. 157.

5 Halifax to Seeds, 14 Apr. 1939, Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, third series, V, (London, 1952), no. 166.

6 Seeds to Halifax, 18 Apr. 1939, DBFP, V, no. 201.

7 K. H. Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London, 1946), p. 403; and J. Harvey (ed.), The Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937-1940 (London, 1970), pp. 289-90.

8 CP 95(39), Mar. 1939, CAB 24/285.

9 Cabinet 30(39), 24 May 1939, CAB 23/99.

10 Harvey, pp. 295-6. For discussion of British reasons for sending Mr. Strang, head of the Central department of the Foreign Office, to Moscow rather than Anthony Eden or, as the Russians suggested, Halifax, see Aster, op. cit., pp. 264-6. For discussion of the composition and method of travel of the military mission, Aster, pp. 290-6.

Germans, encouraged by the dismissal in May of Litvinov, the advocate of collective security, approached the Kremlin on 14 August with a definite proposal, the Russians responded. On 23 August they signed a pact of non-aggression with Nazi Germany, and the British hopes of containing Hitler with the threat of a two-front war were dashed.

The fault for this was not entirely their own. They were in the invidious position of finding their political and military objectives irreconcilably opposed. Initially they had aimed only at creating a bloc of Eastern European states threatened by Nazism, but, for geographical reasons these states could be protected only by the Soviet Union whom they feared almost as much as Germany. Britain had therefore the choice of maintaining guarantees with little military value, or of risking the alienation of the very states she was trying to protect by agreeing to the Russians' guaranteeing them against their will. Since in July the new Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, insisted on extending the circumstances in which this guarantee would apply to cases of 'indirect aggression'[1] or 'an internal coup d'état or reversal of policy in the interests of the aggressor',[2] the British dilemma was particularly acute. All moral considerations aside, they feared enhancing German claims to protect Europe from Communism, claims which had some appeal as the Baltic States showed when they signed non-aggression pacts with Germany in June.

Nonetheless, British policy from March to August 1939 was characterized by the same half-hearted interest in Russian intentions as had operated in the crises of previous years. The Cabinet for instance, guaranteed Poland, whose military value it rated more highly than the Soviet Union's,[3] with no more than formal consultation with the Soviet ambassador, I. Maisky, and this only two hours before the public announcement of the guarantee.[4] Litvinov was 'outraged' by this,[5] and he may well be excused for doubting the English desire for co-operation. Certainly the sense

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1 Seeds to Halifax, 1 July 1939, Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, third series, VI (London, 1953), no. 207.
2 Seeds to Halifax, quoted in Lord Strang: Home and Abroad (London, 1956), p. 179.
3 Aster, p. 94.
4 E. H. J. N. Dalton, The Fateful Years: memoirs, 1931-1945 (London, 1957), p. 241.
5 Harvey, p. 272.

of their irrelevance to British planning must have influenced the Russians in their decision to opt not for collective security against Germany but for the more Machiavellian association with the Reich and the territorial advantages this conferred.

Whatever the exonerating circumstances on either side, however, the Russian pact with Germany was something the British found hard to forgive. It rankled with politicians and military leaders alike, long after they were united with the Soviet Union in a common struggle against Germany. The British, naturally enough, attributed the outbreak of war to Russian perfidy, and the distaste they then felt for the Kremlin was in no way diminished by Russian actions after the German attack on Poland. On 17 September 1939, when the Wehrmacht had trapped the bulk of Polish forces west of the Vistula, the Red Army invaded eastern Poland. Under the terms of the pact with Germany the Soviet Union was allotted Polish territory up to the approximate line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San,[1] but publicly they justified their action with the claim that the Polish government had 'disintegrated'.[2] This argument did not convince the British that Poland had not been ruthlessly partitioned, but since their guarantee of Poland applied only to a German attack, and since a declaration of war against the Soviet Union would have contributed little to the defeat of Germany, they confined themselves to a public statement of disapproval.[3]

In the following weeks they watched while the Soviet government capitalized further on its pact with the Nazis. With the Baltic states recognized to be in their sphere of influence,[4] the Russians secured from Estonia on 28 September the right to lease naval bases in Baltic ports and on the islands of Osel and Dago. In the next two weeks they negotiated similar agreements with Latvia and Lithuania allowing them to maintain land and air forces on these territories. Then they turned to Finland. In October the Soviet government presented claims for frontier adjustments and military concessions and, when the Finns declared them unacceptable, attacked with the Red Army's troops and aircraft on 30 November.

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1 Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, series D, vol. VII (London, 1956), pp. 246-7.
2 Sir L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, vol. I (London, 1970), p. 10.
3 Woodward, pp. 11-12.
4 G. L. Weinberg, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939-1941 (Leiden, 1954), pp. 47-8. The Soviet government, however, recognized the German claim to the Vilna area of Lithuania.

This dashed the hopes the British had had in October of improving relations through a trade agreement with the Kremlin,[1] for there was a surge of public indignation throughout the Western world. This in itself was enough to strain Anglo-Soviet relations severely, but to add to it, the British Cabinet was enticed by the new strategic opportunities, to plan military adventures which threatened war with the Soviet Union. These reckless ideas were entertained because intervention in Scandinavia offered the British and French many advantages other than simply helping the Finns. It allowed them to take the initiative by using their sea power, to divert German attention away from the Western front, to curry favour with the pro-Finn Italians,[2] and to intensify the economic blockade against Germany. Even before the Russo-Finnish war the British, at the instigation of Churchill, had been considering stopping the traffic in Swedish iron ore from the Norwegian port of Narvik.[3] Now Finland's plight offered them the opportunity to completely cut the flow of ore to Germany by occupying the iron-ore fields at Gallivare.

The possibility that war with the Soviet Union might result from such intervention was a considerable objection to the plan, but the Chiefs of Staff were prepared to accept this by the end of December, believing that the severing of the iron-ore supply would bring about the early defeat of Germany.[4] Fortunately, though, they were prevented from provoking the Russians by the refusal of the Norwegian and Swedish governments to co-operate as planned. The Scandinavians remained implacably opposed to any action which might involve them in war with Germany and gave permission only for Allied volunteers in civilian dress to pass through their territory.[5] Without greater rights of transit Allied plans were paralysed, and the Finns, realizing this and the inevitability of Russian success in the spring, began in late February to negotiate for peace. They did still ask for Allied troops and aircraft, which the British and, more

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1 Woodward, pp. 33-4 describes British approaches to Maisky on this question.
2 Weinberg, pp. 91-2.
3 Woodward, pp. 43-4.
4 WP(39)179, 31 Dec. 1939, CAB 66/4. See also The Ironside Diaries, 1937-1940, ed. by R. Macleod and D. Kelly (London, 1962), p. 212.
5 Woodward, p. 72.

enthusiastically, the French considered giving;[1] but there were indications that the Finns wished this help more as a bargaining counter in their negotiations rather than as a means of prolonging their struggle.[2] On 12 March in fact they signed an armistice with the Soviet government, bringing to an end an unedifying episode of British vacillation and indecision.[3] Its only achievements, both negative, were to encourage Hitler to invade Norway against his better judgement,[4] and to provide the Russians with further cause later for suspecting British intentions.

For, while contemplating hostilities against the Soviet Union over Finland, the British and French had also considered extending the conflict by bombing the oil fields in the Caucasus and sending submarines into the Black Sea.[5] Enticed by the prospect of eliminating 80 per cent of Russian oil production[6] and cutting off German supplies, they ignored temporarily the formidable obstacles confronting these plans - the need for Turkish or Iranian co-operation, the diversion of scarce bombers from Britain's own defences or the air forces for France,[7] and the likelihood that Russian defences, poor though they might be, would inflict heavy casualties on the attacking force. The plan to attack the Caucasus was particularly unreal, as an anonymous member of the Air Ministry realized.

It's jolly to look at the map
  And finish the foe in a day.
It's not easy to get at the chap;
  These neutrals are so in the way.
But if you say "What would you do
  To fill the aggressor with gloom?"
Well, we might drop a bomb on Baku,
  Or what about bombs on Batum?

Other methods, of course, may be found.
  We might send a fleet up the Inn:
We might burrow far underground
  And come up in the heart of Berlin.
But I think a more promising clue
  To the totalitarian gloom
Is the dropping of bombs on Baku,
  And perhaps a few bombs on Batum.

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1 Woodward, pp. 92-9.
2 R. Parkinson, Peace for our time (London, 1971), pp. 305-6.
3 Woodward, p. 58.
4 B. H. Liddell Hart, History of the Second World War (London: Pan, 1973), pp. 55-62.
5 Woodward, pp. 111-13.
6 WP(40)91, 8 Mar. 1940, CAB 66/6.
7 COS(40)279 (meeting between COS and French High Command), 27 Mar. 1940, CAB 80/9.

The scale of the map should be small
  If you're winning the war in a day.
It mustn't show mountains at all,
  For mountains may be in the way.
But, taking a statesmanlike view,
  And sitting at home in a room,
I'm all for some bombs on Baku
  And, of course, a few bombs on Batum.

Sometimes I invade the dear Dutch,
  Sometimes I descend on the Danes;
They oughtn't to mind very much,
  And they don't seem to have any planes;
I slip through the Swiss and say "Boo!"
  I pop over the Alps and say "Boom!"
But I still drop a bomb on Baku,
  And I always drop bombs on Batum.

Vladivostock is not very far;
  Sometimes I attack him from there.
With the troops in a rather fast car
  I am on him before he's aware.
And then, it's so hard to say who
  Is fighting, precisely, with whom,
That I'm keen about bombing Baku,
  I insist upon bombing Batum.[1]

Admittedly the British were far less enthusiastic about this and other plans for provoking the Russians than were the French. For one thing they were not under such public pressure at home to help the Finns,[2] and their military leaders did not share the French Commander-in-Chief, General Maurice Gamelin's, confidence that the Germans could not hope for success against the Maginot Line.[3] They were also more sensitive to Russian encroachment and propaganda in the Near East and Asia[4] and were therefore unwilling to entertain the French proposal late in January of a landing at Petsamo. This, the British thought, might provide some encouragement to the Finns, but it would only provoke the Russians without the compensating gain of the iron mines at Gallivare.[5] Nevertheless, despite their reservations, the British were implicated in these plans to attack the Soviet Union. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff (C.I.G.S.), General Edmund Ironside, had written on 24 January 1940 in a strategical appreciation, 'in my opinion the most effective aid that we can give to Finland will be by attacking Russia at as

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1 AIR 9/138.
2 Woodward, p. 100.
3 Anglo-French meeting of 31 Jan. 1940, COS(40)228(S), CAB 80/104.
4 WP(40)91, 8 Mar. 1940, CAB 66/6.
5 Woodward, p. 78.

many points as possible and especially, by interfering with the output of her oil from Baku.[1] When news of these plans later became public,[2] the British responsibility was as great as the French and the Russians suspected them as much - as became clear when in 1941 the British offered to send oil demolition experts to the Caucasus to hinder the German advance.

In fact thanks to British support for Finland, Anglo-Soviet relations during the period December 1939 to March 1940 reached their nadir. The British ambassador to Moscow, Sir William Seeds, left his post late in December and was not replaced until six months later. The Russians interpreted his leaving as being 'unfriendly' to them and insisted, moreover, that Britain and France had been responsible for their expulsion from the League of Nations on 14 December 1939.[3] In these circumstances contacts between British and Soviet representatives were reduced to a minimum. Russo-German relations in contrast enjoyed one of their least troubled periods, the Germans intervening to prevent Italian help for the Finns,[5] and negotiating railway, air and trade agreements with the Russians.[6] In the most significant of these, the Commercial Agreement of 11 February 1940, the Germans offered the Russians coal, naval and military equipment in return for large quantities of oil and other raw materials and the right of transit for German supplies from the Middle and Far East.[7]

This agreement impeded Anglo-Soviet rapprochement even after the war with Finland had ended, removing the major source of friction between them. On 27 March Maisky told Halifax that his government was willing to enter a trade agreement with Britain, but the British insisted on a guarantee that goods they supplied should not be re-exported to Germany. Since the Russians were scrupulously meeting their commitments to Germany at this time[8] (and effectively undermining the British blockade in doing so), this guarantee was not provided.[9] Anglo-Soviet relations in

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1 COS(40)216(S): CAB 80/104.
2 Parliamentary question, 11 July 1940, FO 371 24850 N5967/96/38.
3 Woodward, p. 107.
4 Ibid., p. 107.
5 Weinberg, p. 88.
6 Ibid.,.p. 69.
7 Ibid., p. 71.
8 Ibid., p. 72.
9 Woodward, pp. 455-6.

consequence soon reached an impasse.

However, new opportunities presented themselves with the Germans' spectacular victory over the British and French armies in May 1940. The Kremlin was apparently uneasy at the rapid elimination of France and the freedom Hitler had thus gained to direct his attention to the east. The British therefore decided in June to send Sir Stafford Cripps, long an admirer of Soviet Russia, to Moscow to continue the trade discussions. The Kremlin, however, would not accept Cripps in the capacity of special and extraordinary plenipotentiary. It apparently still resented Seeds' withdrawal, for a Tass communique of 30 May said,

> If the English Government really wishes to conduct negotiations on trade, and not simply to confine itself to talks about some non-existent turn in the relations between England and the U.S.S.R., it can do this through its ambassador in Moscow, Seeds, or some other person occupying the post of ambassador in Moscow should Seeds be replaced . . .

In view of this, the British government appointed Cripps ambassador to Moscow.[1]

Unfortunately Cripps' arrival in the Soviet Union on 12 June 1940 coincided with the Kremlin's ultimatum to the Baltic states. In an effort to reinforce itself against an immensely strengthened Germany, the Soviet government demanded from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia the reform of their governments and the right of free passage for Soviet troops. A few days later the Red Army occupied these countries and on 21 July held elections in which the three states voted to incorporate themselves in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile on 27 June the Kremlin demanded from Romania the cession of Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, the latter of which Romania had gained at Russia's expense after World War I.

Although these actions had the value of exacerbating Russo-German differences - part of Lithuania had been allotted to Germany's sphere of influence in the secret protocol of 1939[2] and the Germans had recognized Russia's right to Bessarabia but not Bukovina[3] - they proved the 'main stumbling block'[4] to the success of Cripps' mission. The British would not recognize the legitimacy of the Baltic elections which, in Halifax's words, were 'so clearly fraudulent',[5] and, conscious of American disapproval if

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1 Woodward, pp. 459-61.
2 Weinberg, p. 99.
3 DGFP, VII, pp. 246-7.
4 Woodward, p. 610.
5 Ibid., p. 475.

they went further,[1] would grant only de facto not de jure recognition to Russian sovereignty there. As well, when their assets in the Baltic states, amounting to some £5,500,000[2] were nationalized without compensation, they refused to surrender to the Soviet government Baltic gold deposited in the Bank of England and Baltic ships in British ports.[3] The annoyance this caused the Russians combined with their fear of antagonizing the Germans and their continuing suspicion of Britain[4] to make Cripps' first year in Moscow particularly sterile.

In an effort to improve the situation the British on 22 October 1940 proposed a new political agreement to the Soviet Union. In this they offered de facto recognition of Soviet sovereignty in the Baltic states, East Poland, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina; assistance for Soviet defence against any future attack by her neighbours; immunity from attack by the United Kingdom or by her existing or future allies by way of Turkey or Iran; consultation regarding the post-war settlement in Europe and Asia; and an assurance that Britain would not enter any anti-Soviet alliance after the war as long as the Soviet government abstained from any hostile action against Britain's interest. In return the British government asked from the Soviet Union that it should treat the United Kingdom, Turkey and Iran with benevolent neutrality, continue assistance to China, and, should a trade agreement be negotiated between the two countries, conclude a non-aggression pact with Britain. Initially the Soviet government attached 'the greatest importance' to these proposals, but its interest soon died. On 10 November the imminent visit of Molotov to Berlin was announced. Although the Soviet deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrei Vyshinsky, assured Cripps that this visit was not an unfriendly act towards His Majesty's Government, the Kremlin made no further reference to the British proposals. Cripps believed that the Russians had decided 'to go with the Axis' as the safest policy for themselves,[5] and indeed the British ambassador was not granted an audience with Molotov from October 1940 to

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1 Ibid., p. 476.
2 D. Dallin, Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942 (New Haven, Connecticut, 1942), p. 323.
3 Woodward, pp. 476-9.
4 Letter from Cripps to Halifax, 10 Oct. 1940, FO 371 24848 N7323/40/38.
5 Woodward, pp. 492-6.

February 1941. Even when he was finally allowed to see the Soviet Foreign Minister, this was, it seems, only because Anthony Eden, appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on 22 December 1940, had specifically protested to Maisky on Cripps' behalf.[1]

Consequently, as Russo-German relations deteriorated for all their public affirmations of amity in the second year of their alliance, there was no corresponding improvement in relations between London and Moscow. The Soviet and German governments disagreed on many issues - German support for Finland during a new crisis with the Soviet Union in August 1940[2] and German penetration of the Balkans,[3] to name but the most serious. Nonetheless Anglo-Soviet relations remained cool, exacerbated by the British persuading the United States government to curtail exports to the Soviet Union.[4] This estrangement between London and Moscow continued even when, from January 1941 onwards, there were signs of a German military concentration against the Soviet Union. The British warned the Soviet authorities of this military build-up, though they thought it might be nothing more than a German 'war of nerves' to extort complete co-operation from the Russians.[5] Churchill, struck by the change of German dispositions before the attack on Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941 even sent a personal, if somewhat conspiratorial, message direct to Stalin.[6]

Nonetheless the Soviet government in a last desperate effort to deprive the Germans of any casus belli redoubled its efforts at co-operation. Pravda publicly denied that the Russo-Japanese pact of 13 April 1941 was directed against Germany,[7] and Russian deliveries of supplies to the Reich, down in January and February, rose substantially in March.[8] On 9 May, after Stalin had assumed full responsibility for government as President of the Council of People's Commissars, the Norwegian, Belgian and Yugoslav embassies in Moscow were closed down, 'owing to their countries' loss of sovereignty'.[9] A few days later the Soviet government established

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1 Ibid., p. 597.
2 A. Seaton, The Russo-German War, 1941-45 (London, 1971), p. 12.
3 Weinberg, pp. 130-1, 154.
4 Woodward, pp. 602-3n.
5 Woodward, p. 594.
6 Sir Winston Churchill, The Second World War, vol. III (Sydney, 1950), p. 320.
7 Woodward, p. 595.
8 Weinberg, p. 161.
9 Woodward, p. 595.

diplomatic relations with Iraq, even though its leader was the pro-Fascist Rashid Ali, against whom British troops were then contending.

In the face of such determined appeasement the British were powerless. All they could do was assure Maisky, when the Joint Intelligence Committee declared that the latter half of June would see 'either war or agreement'[1] between Germany and the Soviet Union, of their support for his government. On 13 June the ambassador was promised economic assistance and a military mission in event of war, but he assured Eden that Britain 'had exaggerated the German concentrations and that Germany was not intending to attack Russia . . . The Soviet Government would react more favourably if our (the British) message were accompanied by action on our (Britain's) part showing that we desired more friendly relations'.[2] On the same day the Soviet newspaper Izvestia declared that 'rumours of Germany's intention to break the pact and open an attack on the USSR are devoid of all foundation . . . rumours that the USSR is preparing for war with Germany are lies and provocations.'[3]

Thus when the Wehrmacht attacked at 3.15 a.m. on 22 June 1941, it met an army whose orders were ambiguous and defensive. Relations between the Kremlin and Britain, now its ally of necessity, were still strained; and, though the British had indicated frequently in the last year their desire to work with the Soviet Union towards the defeat of Germany, there was little indication of the generosity and whole-heartedness with which they would soon take up the Russian cause as their own.

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1 JIC(41)247, 10 June 1941, CAB 79/12.
2 Woodward, p. 621.
3 J. Degras (ed.), Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, vol. III, 1933-1941 (Oxford, 1953), p. 489.

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When the German armed forces attacked the Soviet Union, the British government's reaction was immediate and swift. Despite the issues separating the two countries the Prime Minister without hesitation offered the Russians the United Kingdom's support. In a radio broadcast on the night of 22 June he told the world:

> Any man or state who fights on against Nazism will have our aid. Any man or state who marches with Hitler is our foe . . . It follows therefore that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and the Russian people. We shall appeal to all our friends and allies in every part of the world to take the same course and pursue it, as we shall faithfully and steadfastly to the end . . .[1]

As was said later in parliament, this was 'a decisive act of leadership at a critical moment' in the war.[2] It created the association between Britain and the Soviet Union which had proved so elusive in the 1930s and it laid the foundations of the alliance which was to destroy German hegemony in Europe. Nonetheless in the short term the Soviet Union's belligerence was a mixed blessing for the British. It offered them considerable strategic advantages, but it put them under moral and military pressure to take action beyond their capabilities. The Red Army, suffering appalling losses of men and material in the months immediately following the 'Barbarossa' attack, appealed for diversionary action in Europe. This the British could not undertake, and their resulting embarrassment forced them to resort to offers of military and civil supplies. These their own Services desperately needed, with the result that by October 1941 Britain found itself in the paradoxical position of weakening its own offensive power in the hope of strengthening Soviet resistance.

This situation developed only slowly during the months of July, August and September 1941. In June, the British commitment, despite the generous tone of Churchill's broadcast, was far more cautious and guarded. The Cabinet decided some days before 'Barbarossa' that, should the Soviet Union be attacked, it would take the line in public that Germany was an insatiable tyrant

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1 Churchill, The Second World War, vol. III, pp. 332-3.
2 Parliamentary Debates, vol. 372, col. 977: Speaker, Mr. Lees-Smith, member for Keighley.

that had attacked Russia in order to obtain material for carrying on the war.[1] On the practical side, air action over northwest France would be intensified and, as mentioned earlier, economic assistance and a military mission were offered to Maisky.[2] There was little enthusiasm in government circles for going beyond such gestures. The three Service departments in particular were strongly opposed to either supplying the Soviet Union with munitions or taking diversionary action to draw German forces away from the East. This was not simply because they were acutely conscious of Britain's military weakness but because they distrusted the Soviet Union and believed its resistance would soon collapse.

Together with most other authorities in the West, Britain's military leaders assumed that the Red Army was a blunted weapon, strong in numbers but little else. They believed that any military advances which it had made since Russia's ignominious withdrawal from World War I and the ravages of the civil war had been negated by the Stalinist purges.[3] In 1936 British officers had observed the Red Army in manoeuvres near Minsk, and had been impressed by Soviet technical equipment, mechanical forces and tanks; but they had doubts about its tactical ability and leadership.[4] These were the flaws the purges accentuated. Proportionately more officers were eliminated the higher the command level, and 90 per cent of Army commanders Class I and II[5] and 100 per cent of the fleets' admirals[6] - to name only two categories - were removed. Virtually all experienced leadership was gone and this, combined with administrative inefficiency and the appalling state of Soviet communications, the Chiefs of Staff believed in 1939, made the Red Army an unreliable force. In fact in March of that year the Chiefs of Staff estimated that within two to three weeks of the start of hostilities the Soviet Union would be forced to suspend mobilization 'to avoid a complete breakdown in

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1 WM(41)61st concl., 19 June 1941, CAB 65/18.
2 The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Avon, The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning (London, 1965), p. 268.
3 See, for example, The Memoirs of General the Lord Ismay K.G., P.C., G.C.B., C.H., D.S.O. (London, 1960), p. 224. (Ismay was Deputy-Secretary (Military), War Cabinet.)
4 Report of the visit of the British Military Mission to Moscow, report by Major-General Wavell, AIR 2/1911.
5 Erickson, The Soviet High Command, p. 507.
6 R. Conquest, The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties (London, 1968), p. 485.

industry and national life'.[1]

Later events in 1939 confirmed the British in this opinion of Soviet military capacity. The Red Army's performance in Poland and the Baltic states did not seem impressive. In the former case, although the equipment of the first-line divisions seemed good, that of the reserve arms was reported as 'pitiful' and the cavalry and infantry, 'an undisciplined rabble'.[2] In Estonia, despite the large number and efficiency of tanks, there were many breakdowns of mechanical transport, shortages of petrol and supply delays.[3]

Then came the war against Finland. Perhaps no single event so misled British military leaders in their opinion of the Soviet Army. The fact that it took 1,200,000 Russians, 1,500 tanks and 3,000 aircraft, three and a half months to defeat 210,000 poorly equipped Finns[4] outweighed all evidence - then and later - in the Red Army's favour. The initial debacle of the Soviet forces, their unsophisticated tactics and the poor co-operation between the arms of their Services[5] eclipsed the fact that they soon recovered and learnt from their mistakes. Even when it became clear, as it did in January 1940, that Soviet weaknesses had been overestimated and the difficulties of the terrain underestimated,[6] the War Office remained scornful. A report based on the interrogation of Soviet prisoners-of-war said in February 1940,

> The average present-day Russian is nearer a dirty, but semi-intelligent animal than he has been for centuries past. All ambition has been smothered, all initiative repressed . . .
> The average Red Army soldier is incredibly ignorant . . .[7]

This prejudice - by no means limited to junior officers - encouraged the British to underestimate the Red Army throughout 1940. Little weight was given to the fact that after the failures of Finland, the Soviet forces were extensively reformed.

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1 CP 95, Mar. 1939, CAB 24/285.
2 Weekly resumé, 5 Oct. 1939, CAB 80/1.
3 WP(39)101, 28 Oct. 1939, CAB 66/3; see also report by military attaché, Riga, 28 Oct. 1939, FO 371 23690 N5997/518/38.
4 B. C. U. Cuthbertson, Arctic and Subarctic Operations, (unpublished manual for Canadian Armed Forces, 1970) p. 2-28.
5 See Erickson, p. 544.
6 WP(40)22, 20 Jan. 1940, CAB 66/5.
7 Report by Major R. O. A. Gathouse and Capt. C. H. Tamplin, 22 Feb. 1940, FO 371 24850 N3288/132/38. For a similar disparaging account, this time of the Soviet Air Force in Finland, see the Journal of the Royal United Services Institute, May 1940.

The already large defence budget was increased by 40 per cent in April,[1] and in May, Marshal Timoshenko replaced Marshal Voroshilov as Commissar of Defence. Under his direction measures were taken to improve discipline;[2] new armoured formations began to be formed on the German panzer model, and re-equipment with more modern tanks and aircraft was accelerated.[3] These and other changes, which were admittedly uncompleted by mid-1941, attracted little attention in the West. With their Service attachés almost continually ignored in Moscow,[4] the British continued to notice the flaws of the past, and ignored those indefinable qualities of morale, courage and improvisation which in 1941 were to prove the Russians' salvation. When the day of the German invasion came, the British C.I.G.S., General John Dill, expected the Russians to 'be rounded up in hordes'.[5] The Joint Intelligence Committee predicted the Red Army would lose the Ukraine and Moscow in a minimum of three to four weeks or a maximum of 'six weeks (or more)'.[6] The Joint Planners also, working on the Intelligence estimate that the German armoured divisions had proved themselves capable of advancing twenty-five miles a day for a fortnight,[7] estimated that Russian resistance could not last for more than a few weeks.[8] Eighty per cent of the War Office put it even lower; the Parliamentary Under Secretary for War, Edward Grigg, told Harold Nicolson on 24 June that the War Office expected the Eastern campaign to last ten days. 'They are not all pleased by this new war, which will give great triumphs to Hitler and leave him free to fling his whole force against us'.[9]

Possibly Britain's military leaders persisted in such gloomy estimates of the Red Army's capacity because they resented Soviet actions in 1939 and 1940. Dill certainly disliked the Russians intensely, finding any idea of associating with them, even after the German attack, foul - 'a lot of pigstickers', he dubbed the

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1 Analysis from British embassy, Moscow, Apr. 1940, FO 371 24850 N5254/132/38.
2 Erickson, p. 555.
3 Seaton, The Russo-German War, pp. 92-3.
4 See, for example, Letter Sir William Seeds to Sir. L. Oliphant, 4 Mar. 1939, FO 371 23677 N1895/57/38; minute by Mr. Maclean, 16 Oct. 1940, FO 371 24848 N6884/40/38.
5 Quoted by Ismay in a letter to Lord Louis Mountbatten, Sept. 1964, Ismay papers, IV/MOU/124, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives.
6 JIC(41)234(Revise), 14 June 1941, CAB 79/12.
7 M.I.14/DR/58/41, 23 June 1941, WO 193/644.
8 JP(41)473(S)(draft), 22 June 1941, CAB 84/32.
9 N. Nicolson (ed.), Harold Nicolson: Diaries & Letters, 1939-45 (Bungay, Suffolk: Fontana Books, 1970), pp. 173-4.

members of the Soviet Military Mission which arrived early in July.[1] His feelings were shared by the Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lieut-General Henry Pownall; he wrote in his diary on 29 June 1941,

> I avoid the expression 'Allies' for the Russians are a dirty lot of murdering thieves themselves, and double crossers of the deepest dye. It is good to see the two biggest cut-throats in Europe, Hitler and Stalin going for each other, (sic) I only hope Stalin will make a deep gash in Hitler's throat. With a bit of luck he will. It's impossible to say how long Russian resistance will last - three weeks or three months? [2]

In defence of the military it must be stressed that many others, some of them more sympathetic to the Soviet Union, shared the Services' pessimism. Hitler and his generals were the outstanding example, believing as they did that the campaign in the East would be short and swift. On the Allies' side, Eden admitted that he was sceptical when the Soviet ambassador assured him on 2 June 1941 that ten German armoured divisions would meet fifteen Russian.[3] Cripps also, recently back from Moscow, predicted to the Cabinet on the 16th June that Stalin would capitulate to Hitler, either politically in an effort to avoid hostilities, or militarily after a short campaign.[4] In the United States too, the Chiefs of Staff, influenced by the unmitigated gloom of their military attaché in Moscow, did not hope for a campaign lasting more than three months. The Secretary of State for War, Henry Stimson, advised President Roosevelt on the General Staff's authority that 'Germany will be thoroughly occupied in beating Russia for a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months'.[5]

Professor M. Postan, therefore, is not strictly correct when he states in his history of British war production that 'There was no hesitation in welcoming Russia's accession to the Allied ranks . . . It was taken for granted from the very outset that this country would have to do its utmost to sustain Russia in her military struggles'.[6] In reality the Service departments were preoccupied

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1 Sir John Kennedy, The Business of War: The War Narrative of Major-General Sir J. Kennedy (London, 1957), pp. 147, 149. For Ismay's agreement, see Ismay, pp. 223-4.
2 Pownall papers.
3 The Reckoning, p. 267.
4 WM(41)60th concl., min. 1, confidential annex, 16 June 1941, CAB 65/22: see also J. Leasor, War at the Top (London, 1959), p. 155.
5 R. E. Sherwood, The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, vol. 1 (London, 1948), pp. 303-4.
6 M. M. Postan, British War Production (HMSO, 1952), p. 118.

with the fear that the Red Army would soon collapse, leaving Britain all the more vulnerable; they were obsessed, especially in the case of the War Office, with the prejudices of the past, and they feared putting further strain on Britain's scarce resources. For the last of these reasons the Chiefs of Staff resisted the untiring efforts of Churchill and the Soviet government throughout June and July to get them to take the offensive in Europe or northern Russia.

The Prime Minister first suggested this on the day after the German attack on the Soviet Union. With his indomitable optimism, his passion for taking the offensive, his facility for ignoring uncomfortable facts and his scorn for his advisers' pessimism, Churchill saw the chance to 'make hell while the sun shines'. He suggested a raid of 25,000 - 30,000 men on northern Europe.[1] The Service departments, however, urged caution. Although they saw the need to capitalize on the Soviet Union's belligerence - as the Director of Military Operations, Major-General John Kennedy said in his diary, 'The thieves have fallen out. This Russian business may stretch the Boche and help us. We shall have to try to keep it going'.[2] - they were conscious of the dangers of precipitate action. The security of the United Kingdom was still finely balanced. In mid-1941 it had finally begun to possess 'something like an adequate land-force' with which to meet the threat of invasion; and in June there were at last signs that the command of the air 'had passed or was passing into Allied hands'.[3] Set against this, however, were the facts that in the previous months shipping losses had been prohibitive and the demands of the Middle Eastern theatre were unceasing. In March, April and May 1,728,649 tons of shipping had been lost,[4] and the combined production of the Commonwealth did not exceed 1 million tons of new shipping a year.[5] The Middle East meanwhile had absorbed all the resources the Home Forces could reasonably spare by early 1941,[6] yet its needs continued to expand. Wavell's offensive in June came to an inconclusive end; the fighting in Crete and Greece took a heavy toll, and the commitment to Syria and Iraq demanded further

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1 COS(41)116(O), 23 June 1941, CAB 80/58.
2 Kennedy, p. 147.
3 J. M. A. Gwyer, Grand Strategy, vol. III, June 1941-August 1942 (London: HMSO, 1964), p. 3.
4 Ibid., p. 9.
5 Ibid., p. 11.
6 Postan, p. 130.

reinforcements. Britain's strategy in June 1941 was therefore defensive. It stressed the protection of the United Kingdom and of the communications in the Atlantic, and it limited offensive action to the nebulous foursome, bombing, blockade, propaganda and subversion.[1]

Undoubtedly Britain's prospects improved with the diversion of German forces to the East. The threat of invasion was eased. Some respite was offered in the Middle East.[2] German naval vessels were diverted to the protection of communications in northern Norway; and the prospects for the bombing offensive improved while the Luftwaffe was engaged in the East.[3] Nonetheless the Planners saw little encouragement in these changes to recommend offensive action in Europe. They assumed the respite for Britain would be brief and that with the collapse of Soviet resistance new dangers would emerge. They believed the Caucasus would be threatened within one month of the end of the Russian campaign,[4] and that the Germans could eliminate the Red Army and attempt an invasion of the British Isles before the end of the autumn.[5] A further fear, expressed by the C.I.G.S., was that Soviet belligerence would encourage the Japanese to extend their advance southwards.[6]

Consequently even before they had considered Churchill's proposal for an attack on Europe the Planners had ruled out the despatch of troops overseas.[7] They recommended on 23 June that the only action which should be taken in response to the Russo-German conflict was the bombing of German transportation systems, raids on the Norwegian and French coasts, and the interception of all Russian merchantmen at sea, if Russian defeat were imminent.[8] An operation of the size Churchill suggested they deemed completely impracticable. It ignored the paralysing shortage of shipping made particularly acute at this time by plans to occupy the Atlantic islands. (These operations were given high priority because of the importance of the Atlantic communications and the fear that, after victory in the Soviet Union, Germany would turn to the

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1 JP(41)444, 14 June 1941, CAB 79/12.
2 JIC(41)234 (Revise), 14 June 1941, CAB 79/12.
3 S. W. Roskill, The War at Sea, vol. I (London: HMSO, 1954), pp. 483-5.
4 JP(41)650, 10 Aug. 1941, CAB 84/33.
5 JP(41)478, 23 June 1941, CAB 79/12.
6 COS(41)401, 28 June 1941, CAB 80/29.
7 Gwyer, p. 12.
8 JP(41)478, loc. cit.

invasion of Spain.)[1] Although the number of troops involved in 'Puma', 'Thruster' and 'Springboard' was not great, the drain on landing craft was; and while these operations were planned only a brigade group (5,000-6,000 men) at most could be committed to Europe. So the Joint Planners stated on 25 June.[2] Four days later they decided that even this was excessive and recommended only a small raid of 2,000 men without tanks or guns;[3] and on a further day's reflection, they reduced this even more. The proposal submitted to the Defence Committee by the Director of Combined Operations on 4 July was for a raid by 320 men and 6 tanks.[4]

Churchill was infuriated by this suggestion. Believing the Planners to be 'the whole machinery of negation',[5] he declared the proposed operation to be 'most inadequate and out of all proportion in the general war situation'. The world would ridicule 'the feeble efforts' that were all Britain could do to help the Russians. The Defence Committee agreed - far better to remain inactive than to make such an inadequate gesture.[6]

The focus of attention therefore turned to other operations; but the Service departments resisted these also. Late in June, Soviet representatives in London and Moscow pressed for air action over Europe[7] and for combined Anglo-Soviet operations against Petsamo in northern Finland.[8] The purpose of the latter suggestion, which originated from a luncheon between Maisky and the Minister for Supply, Lord Beaverbrook,[9] was the protection of the route to Murmansk, the only ice-free port in northern Russia. According to the Soviet Military Mission to London, German air forces in the area would be neutralized, making German naval vessels more vulnerable, while operations on land would foil the enemy advance to Murmansk.[10]

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1 Gwyer, pp. 94-5.
2 Ibid., pp. 8, 94; JP(41)485, 25 June 1941, CAB 84/32.
3 JP(41)494(E), 29 June 1941, CAB 84/32.
4 JP(41)500, 30 June 1941, CAB 84/32; DO(41)45th mtg., min. 5, DO(41)46th mtg., min. 1, CAB 69/2.
5 Lieut-General Sir Ian Jacob (Military Assistant Secretary to War Cabinet) in Sir John Wheeler-Bennett (ed.), Action This Day: Working with Churchill (London, 1968), p. 196.
6 DO(41)46th mtg., loc. cit.
7 WM(41)64th concl., CAB 65/18.
8 FO survey of Exchanges between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government on the subject of British military assistance to Russia, 19 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29471 N6654/3/38.
9 WM(41)64th concl., CAB 65/18.
10 Account of meeting at Admiralty with Soviet representatives in DO(41)50th mtg., min. 2, 10 July 1941, CAB 69/2.

The Service departments, however, doubted the feasibility of the plan. Britain was not to provide any troops but it was to supply two or three cruisers, light naval craft and some two to three hundred aircraft,[1] and the First Sea Lord, Admiral A. Dudley P. R. Pound, doubted the Russians' ability to provide the essential protection from shore-based aircraft.[2] He advocated only the sending of two Royal Navy aircraft carriers to the area to harass German shipping.[3] The War Office meanwhile was even less forthcoming. It thought the whole operation would be a costly waste of scarce resources in a futile 'gesture to the Bolsheviks'.[4] Its senior officers advised the C.I.G.S. on 10 July in a mystifying burst of self-confidence,

> We are doing quite nicely against Germany, particularly in view of ever increasing American aid and the practical certainty that U.S.A. will sooner or later come into the war. All our forces are now being devoted to the accomplishment of a definite strategy for winning the war without having allowed for Russian aid. If we are going to divert forces from this major strategy in order to give Russia direct assistance, then we must be quite sure that these forces are not going to be wasted. In other words we want more than assurances that Russia will not be rapidly defeated by Germany: we want concrete evidence. If we get this evidence, then we can plan accordingly.[5]

Events on the Eastern front did not provide their evidence. On the contrary throughout June and July the Soviet forces, though resisting stubbornly,[6] suffered appalling losses of men, equipment and territory to the invading troops. According to a British Intelligence Staff estimate, by early July the Red Army had lost 89 of its 164 infantry and 20 of its 29 armoured divisions; it could no longer, the report said, hold a continuous front.[7] At the same time the British received gloomy reports about the state of Soviet defences in the Arctic. Two officers returning from Murmansk and Archangel declared that Russian naval efficiency in the area was 'low', the anti-aircraft defences 'poor', the warning system 'practically non-existent' and the fighter aircraft

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1 Ibid.
2 COS(41)239th mtg., min. 6, 10 July 1941, WO 193/666.
3 DO(41)45th mtg., min. 2, 3 July 1941, CAB 69/2.
4 Note for War Cabinet meeting, 4 July 1941, WO 193/666.
5 Minute by Lieut-Colonel Sugden, on which Brigadier Playfair (MOI), Brigadier Mallaby (Deputy Director of Military Operations) and Kennedy had all written their agreement, 10 July 1941, WO 193/666.
6 WP(41)160, 10 July 1941, WP(41)166, 17 July 1941, CAB 66/17.
7 Gwyer, p. 93.

mostly obsolescent.[1] This confirmed the Chiefs' of Staff doubts. Already anxious about the dangers posed by the unending Arctic daylight, on 21 July they 'strongly deprecate(d)' the sending of a British force to north Russia.[2] They recommended instead that a naval force be established off Spitzbergen and that one or two submarines operate off Murmansk.[3]

Consequently while the Russians lost over a half a million men in little more than a month, the British found their support limited to naval action in the Arctic and air action over Europe. They sent two aircraft carriers to attack enemy installations in northern Norway, two submarines to operate with the Soviet Northern Fleet, and a small force to the island of Spitzbergen. These operations had mixed success. The aircraft from the carriers suffered heavy losses over one port, Kirkenes, and found no shipping at the other target, Petsamo. The operation's achievement consisted more in the accompanying of a mine-sweeper to Archangel for which, according to Vice-Admiral John Tovey of the Home Fleet, the Russians were most appreciative.[4] The two British submarines meanwhile helped eleven Soviet submarines to disrupt German supply lines to northern Finland. This, on the Germans' own admission, provided great relief to the Soviet forces contending with the Wehrmacht in the area.[5] The Spitzbergen operation was also successful within its own terms. It removed the Norwegian and Soviet coal miners from the island and destroyed the mining installations there.[6] Soviet representatives, however, had wished the island to be occupied[7] and were disappointed when the British thought this was unnecessary strategically.[8]

None of these operations, either singly or together, was enough to satisfy the Soviet government's demand for diversionary action. Indeed, by late July and early August, when these attacks were mounted, they had been eclipsed by greater Russian demands for aid - particularly for a second front in Europe and for supplies of munitions. On 12 July the British and Soviet governments signed

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1 COS(41)145(O), 21 July 1941, CAB 80/58.
2 Ibid., According to Donald W. Mitchell, A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power (London, 1974), p. 422, the Russians did launch an amphibious landing themselves.
3 COS(41)145(O), loc. cit.
4 Roskill, The War at Sea, vol. 1, pp. 485-6.
5 Ibid., p. 493.
6 Gwyer, p. 198.
7 Moscow tel. no. 802, 15 July 1941, quoted in FO survey of exchanges. FO 371 29471 N6654/3/38.
8 DO(41)55th mtg., min. 2, 7 Aug. 1941, CAB 69/2.

in Moscow an agreement of mutual assistance. In this they promised not only that the signatories would consult each other before signing a peace, but that they would 'render to each other assistance of all kinds in (the) present war against Hitlerite Germany'.[1] Four days after this Maisky asked Eden for a cross-Channel operation by British armoured divisions. The Soviet government, he said, in view of the withdrawal of German armoured units to the East, expected 'an important land invasion' in France by the British.[2] The head of the new military mission in Moscow, General Noel Mason-Macfarlane, confirmed that Russian resentment at Britain's inactivity was growing.[3]

Naturally the Chiefs of Staff resisted these demands for cross-Channel operations. All the factors which had made Churchill's proposal for a raid impracticable - the shortage of shipping, the strength of German forces on the near coast of France, the lack of air cover further afield, and the need to conserve the anti-invasion force - applied equally now. Furthermore the Chiefs of Staff scorned the Russians' claim for sacrifices from Britain. They answered Macfarlane with self-righteous indignation:

> Fact is that our present difficulties are largely due to Russian action in 1939 and for the last 12 months we have been fighting alone against heavy odds . . . Our main strategy i.e. to weaken Germany by air, naval and economic action and to maintain our position in Middle and Far East obviously helps Russia indirectly very greatly. Direct aid is a different question. As you know we are considering certain diversions. But from the purely military point of view no action beyond what we are doing now can materially affect the operations of the main Russian Armies and Air Forces. They must save themselves just as we saved ourselves in the Battle of Britain and in the Atlantic.[4]

Within a week, however, the detachment of the Chiefs of Staff was shattered. On 19 July Marshal Stalin himself joined Maisky in requesting a second front in France; he broke the diplomatic silence he had maintained since the German attack a month earlier to say:

> . . . the position of the Soviet forces at the front remains tense . . . It is easy to imagine that the position of the German forces would have been many times more favourable had the Soviet troops had to face the attack of the German forces not in the regions of Kishinev, Lwow, Brest, Kaunas, and

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1 Quoted in N6654/3/38, loc. cit.
2 FO despatch, no. 123 to Moscow, ibid.
3 Annex to COS(41)244th mtg., 14 July 1941, CAB 79/12.
4 Annex to COS(41)244th mtg., 14 July 1941, CAB 79/12.

> Viborg, but in the region of Odessa, Kamanets Podolski, Minsk, and the environs of Leningrad.
>
> It seems to me therefore that the military situation of the Soviet Union, as well as of Great Britain, would be considerably improved if there could be established a front against Hitler in the West - Northern France, and in the North - the Arctic.
>
> . . . I fully realise the difficulties in the establishment of such a front. I believe however that in spite of the difficulties it should be formed . . .[1]

This was an appeal which could not be ignored, not simply because it was the Soviet head of state who made it, after leaving unanswered two personal messages from Churchill. It was a genuine cri de coeur, as Stalin's uncharacteristic admission of weakness and apologetic reference to Soviet actions of the past showed.

But the British could not respond. The prejudices of the military might be overcome but the obstacles in the way of landing in Europe could not. At this stage of the war action in northern France was beyond Britain's capabilities. Even Churchill realised this now, and regretfully he answered Stalin on 20 July:

> The Germans have forty divisions in France alone, and the whole coast has been fortified with German diligence for more than a year . . . The only part where we could have even temporary air superiority and air fighter protection is from Dunkirk to Boulogne. This is one mass of fortifications . . . There is less than five hours' darkness, and even then the whole area is illuminated by searchlights. To attempt a landing in force would be to encounter a bloody repulse, and petty raids would only lead to fiascos doing far more harm than good to both of us. It would all be over without their having to move or before they could move a single unit from your front.

He had no option, he explained, but to veto plans for a landing in France. The Arctic, however, was a different matter. He told Stalin of the planned naval operations and that Britain was examining the possibility of basing R.A.F. squadrons at Murmansk.[2]

This was a significant moment in British policy towards the Soviet Union. It was the first time the government admitted its almost total inability to take diversionary action in Europe, and from this time onwards its embarrassment at its inactivity grew. Although the Kremlin received Churchill's message with apparently good grace - Stalin telling Cripps that he understood

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1 Churchill, III, pp. 342-3.
2 Churchill, III, pp. 344-5.

the difficulties and had 'no questions or reproaches'[1] - increasingly the British searched for alternative methods of aid. In the following months they resorted to offering military and civil supplies to compensate the Soviet Union for their lack of offensive action.

This was a development which the Service departments resisted, just as they had opposed efforts to force them to take precipitate action. A few weeks earlier, at the end of June, they had been presented with a staggering list of military and civil requirements by the Soviet government. This included 3,000 fighters, 3,000 bombers, 20,000 light anti-aircraft guns, incendiaries, bombs, flame-throwers, submarine detecting devices, magnetic mines, machine tools, raw materials, wheat, sugar, meat and miscellaneous army supplies such as 3 million pairs of boots and 10 million metres of woollen cloth.[2] The Service departments had rejected most of these requests out of hand. Britain's own forces were desperately short of modern and reliable weapons. They were suffering the consequences of the stop-gap policies of the previous year when, in the critical days after Dunkirk, tank production had been subordinated to aircraft production[3] and quantity rather than quality of all munitions had been emphasised.[4] Modern tanks and heavy bombers were in particularly short supply. The army's need of the former had changed and relentlessly expanded[5] at the very time that the nation's war production was nearing the limit of its capacity.[6] Bomber Command meanwhile had so few heavy bombers that in May 1941 its total striking force was only half that of Germany.[7] Fighter production was also lagging at levels which the Chiefs of Staff considered inadequate to provide for wastage and re-equipment. Early in July they calculated that simply to keep the necessary reserves at home, they would have to reduce shipments of fighters to the Middle East to the minimum in the period till 1 September.[8] All the Service departments looked

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1 Sir Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War (Concise) (London: HMSO, 1962), p. 153.
2 Sir S. Cripps, no. 663, 29 June 1941, CAB 105/35; Sir S. Cripps to MEW, no. 77 ARFAR, 29 June 1941, FO 371 29566 N4074/3084/38.
3 Postan, p. 160.
4 Ibid., p. 192.
5 See Postan, pp. 127-31, 185-91 for an account of the increasing armoured component in the British army and of the changing demand for tanks.
6 Gwyer, p. 139.
7 H. Duncan Hall, North American Supply (London: HMSO, 1955), p. 307
8 COS(41)125(O), 2 July 1941, CAB 80/58.

to the United States for ultimate relief; but in mid-1941 the effects of the Lend-Lease legislation of March 1941 had yet to be felt.[1] U.S. production was to take many months - if not years - to reach the levels the British considered adequate.[2]

Consequently, on receiving Russian requests for aid, the War Office advised the Chiefs of Staff that:

> The Army requirements demanded are clearly incapable of being supplied. As regards supply of equipment, it is not unlikely that the problem will be solved in a very short time by the fact that there will be no seaport by which it could be sent into Russia even were the equipment available. It would therefore seem best as a matter of tactics for Mason-Macfarlane to temporise on this subject.[3]

The Chiefs of Staff agreed,[4] and told Macfarlane on 3 July to inform the Soviet government that 'We cannot provide modern fighter and bomber aircraft as requested as the intensive operations in progress are at present absorbing our full output'. They offered only, as a specimen, one Hurricane fighter and possibly some 1,000 lb bombs, should these prove suitable for Soviet bomb carriers and stowage; 4,000 lb bombs, anti-aircraft guns and flame-throwers, however, they refused to supply.[5] The Ministry of Economic Warfare also was cautious in its response. It told Cripps on 4 July that Soviet demands for raw materials exceeded British estimates of immediate Russian needs; and that though some products, for example, jute, lead, shellac and boots, could be provided, machine tools and aluminium could not. The shortage of these in Britain and the United States was such that it already impeded vital war production.[6]

Within the next two weeks, however, the government departments were obliged to change their minds. As the extent of the Russian catastrophe emerged and the limits of British offensive power became clear, the political and military pressure to provide supplies for the Russians grew. On 18 July the Soviet ambassador extracted from the Secretary of State for Air, Archibald Sinclair, an admission that it might be possible to spare some fighter

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1 H. Duncan Hall and C. C. Wrigley, Studies of Overseas Supply (London: HMSO, 1956), pp. 19, 25.
2 See, for example, Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 308.
3 Note on telegrams from Macfarlane for COS mtg., WO 193/655.
4 COS(41)229th mtg., min. 4, 30 June 1941, CAB 79/12.
5 FO to Moscow, no. 710, CAB 105/35.
6 MEW to Sir S. Cripps, no. T31/68 MOSSY, FO 371 29566 N4704/3084/38.

aircraft from the United States;[1] and on the following day, Maisky appealed also to Eden for some quota of U.S. aircraft for the Red Army.[2] On 20 July, therefore, the day Churchill's message was sent to Stalin, the Air Ministry met to consider what aircraft it could spare for the hard-pressed Russians.

It was an agonizing meeting.[3] At first it seemed Chiefs of Staff were right in saying that Britain had no aircraft to spare. Bombers, even Maisky seemed to agree, had to remain in the United Kingdom where they could be used most effectively in the air offensive against Germany. Fighters, on the other hand, were in desperate shortage still. The Vice-Chief of Air Staff told the meeting that there would be no surplus of fighter aircraft until mid-1942 and that in terms of reserves the position at the end of 1941 would be even worse than at the end of 1940. Both the Middle East and the air forces at home were dependent on American supplies of Kittyhawks (P-40), Lightnings (P-38) and Mustangs (P-51). Airacobras (P-39) were not expected to be available until April 1942; there was not a large enough reserve of Spitfires for these to be given to the Russians; Defiants could be spared only at the expense of future training, and Vultee aircraft were already promised to the Chinese. The choice was thus excruciatingly narrowed down to Hurricanes and Tomahawks (an earlier model of the P-40). There was the necessary 85 per cent reserve of Hurricane I's, but the Secretary of State did not think the Russians would want this aircraft. It was obsolescent, and even during the Battle of Britain had been inferior in speed to the Messerschmitt 109E.[4] Production of Hurricane II's on the other hand was 300 a month, when wastage was 100 a month and the allocation to the Middle East 70 a month; but the Air Ministry was loath to part with this aircraft. It chose instead to send the Russians 200 Tomahawks. This 'plane had several points to recommend it. Not only would it be surplus to requirements by November 1941, but it was soon to be phased out of the Middle East.[5] Furthermore it was American.

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1 Note by Sinclair on meeting with Maisky and Admiral Kharmalov, head of the Soviet Military and Naval Mission, 18 July 1941, AIR 20/3910.

2 Eden to Cripps, no. 131, 19 July 1941, FO 371 29562 N3927/3014/38.

3 The description of this meeting is contained in AIR 2/5333. Unless otherwise stated, information in the following paragraph is taken from this account.

4 K. Munson, Aircraft of World War II (Shepperton, Surrey, 1972), p. 90.

5 Major-General I. S. O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, volume III (September 1941 to September 1942) (London: HMSO, 1960), p. 205.

This meant, the British argued, that the responsibility for spare parts and ground equipment would not be theirs. To some degree, therefore, the loss to the Middle East and Army Co-operation squadrons which offering the Russians the aircraft involved, would be offset.

The offer, however, would still be costly; 180 of the planes had been destined for the Middle East,[1] and should the Russians collapse, the United Kingdom would be unable to spare Hurricanes to make up the Middle East's loss.[2] Similarly, if the invasion threat became imminent again, the twenty Tomahawks taken from the Army Co-operation reserve would be sorely missed.[3] Nonetheless, the Cabinet, after consultation with President Roosevelt's confidant, Harry Hopkins, who was then in London,[4] agreed to take the gamble, 'not withstanding the risks involved'. It argued that 'It was of the utmost importance to make a ready and early response to the Russian demands, even though we were without knowledge of their own resources!.[5] In the circumstances the proposal to send the Tomahawks seemed the most suitable arrangement.

Unfortunately neither the Russians nor the Americans agreed. After an initial burst of gratitude,[6] the Red Army found much to criticize in the Tomahawks, as will be seen later. The Americans also found much to criticize, particularly in the assumption that they would bear the burden of maintaining the aircraft in the Soviet Union. To the dismay of the British, although Roosevelt agreed to the allocation,[7] the War Department insisted that it had no ammunition, spare parts or ground equipment which could be given to the Russians. It could probably provide technicians to train the Russians in the use of the aircraft, it said, but that was all.[8] After a week's argument the Americans relented slightly and offered to provide equipment for the 59 Tomahawks still in the United States awaiting shipment, but they

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1 Meeting in AM, AIR 2/5333.
2 Draft memorandum by SOS Air for Cabinet, 24 July 1941, AIR 2/5333.
3 Mtg in AM, ibid.
4 Air Whit to Britman (British representative in Washington), X.353, 2 Aug. 1941, AIR 2/5333.
5 WM(41)74th concl. min. 3, 24 July 1941, CAB 65/19.
6 Meetings with Maisky, 24, 25 July 1941, AIR 2/5333.
7 R. C. Lukas, Air Force Aspects of American Aid to the Soviet Union: the crucial years, 1941-1942(Ph.D., The Florida State University, 1963), p. 35. Lukas also gives a detailed account of the shortage of aircraft spare parts in the United States (pp. 42-5).
8 Viscount Halifax (ambassador to W'ton), no. 505 PURSA, 30 July 1941, AIR 2/5333.

continued to view the 140 from the United Kingdom as a British responsibility in all ways.[1] Even more they expected the British to provide .50 inch ammunition for all 200 Tomahawks.[2] Since the R.A.F. shared the Americans' 'desperate shortage'[3] of ammunition, and since it had received only one third of its own air frame and engine spare-part requirements so far,[4] the American attitude put the whole Tomahawk project in jeopardy. As the Air Ministry saw it, the offer had been conditional on the Americans filling the role assigned to them and 'clearly if the United States is not ready to provide spares etc. delivery will have to be stopped'.[5]

However, Churchill had already told Stalin on 25 July that Britain would provide 200 Tomahawks.[6] Furthermore, on the same day he had given instructions in London that 'the question of assisting the Russians should be regarded as most urgent and should be handled in a sympathetic spirit by the Service Departments'.[7] In these circumstances the Air Ministry had little option but to accept the American attitude and to further deprive the Middle East.[8] Portal grudgingly told the U.S. ambassador to London, John Winant, on 11 August that:

> The Air Ministry have been compelled reluctantly to agree to the release of the necessary equipment and munition if the American administration has said its last word . . . this release of equipment has been made at the expense of urgent Middle East requirements and I am afraid that Middle East operations will be seriously affected by it.

He agreed, he said, to send enough supplies to allow the aircraft to operate on their arrival and to maintain them for two months, but he would be 'deeply grateful' if anything could be done to make the U.S. Army Air Corps (U.S.A.A.F.) change its mind.[9] In fact later in the month the War Department, under pressure from Roosevelt, agreed to the shipment of as many spare parts as possible;[10] but the issue remained a contentious one between Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union for many months to come.

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1 Britman to Air Whit, CAESAR 365, 6 Aug. 1941, ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Air Whit to Britman, WEBBER WX.726, 8 Aug. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
4 CAESAR 365, loc. cit.
5 Air Whit to Britman, X.353, 2 Aug. 1941, AIR 2/5333.
6 Churchill, III, p. 345.
7 COS(41)259th mtg., min. 1, 25 July 1941, WO 193/666.
8 DO(41)57th mtg., min. 2, 11 Aug. 1941, CAB 69/2.
9 AIR 8/1000.
10 Lukas, pp. 43-4.

This misunderstanding had arisen because the British had assumed that the American Armed Forces were prepared to make sacrifices on the Soviet Union's behalf. They did this because Roosevelt's public statements in June and July had indicated his support for British policy towards the Soviet Union and Hopkins had encouraged London to expect Washington's support. As the Air Ministry told its representative in the U.S. capital on 2 August, 'War Cabinet took this decision in consultation with Hopkins and in conformity with (the) President's initiative in proposing full assistance to Russia from both U.S.A. and ourselves'.[1] Indeed Roosevelt did support the Cabinet's decision, but the British had reckoned without the divisions within the American administration. They had underestimated the resentment amongst the U.S. Armed Services at their continual loss of munitions to Great Britain, and had not realized the extent to which military authorities in Washington shared their own departments' reservations about supplying the Soviet Union.

For reaction in the United States to the Soviet Union's involvement in the war had been similar to that in Britain. The Service departments there had shared the British scepticism about the Red Army's potential[2] and had feared also the effect that Soviet demands might have on their own equipment position. Some amongst them, most notably the Secretary of State for War, Henry Stimson, the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, and Admiral H. R. Stark, saw in Soviet belligerence a unique opportunity for action. They favoured intervention in the Atlantic[3] and escorting convoys to Britain.[4] The country at large, however, was far more cautious. A public opinion poll on 24 June showed that 54 per cent of the nation opposed sending the Russians munitions, 35 per cent favoured such gestures and 11 per cent were undecided.[5] The isolationists meanwhile saw in the Russo-German conflict further confirmation of their belief that the war was a godless struggle from which they were better clear.[6]

Roosevelt had the difficult task of picking his way between

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1 Air Whit to Britman, X.353, AIR 2/5333.
2 See Sumner Welles, The Time for Decision (New York, 1944), pp.325-6.
3 W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, The Undeclared War, 1940-1941 (London, 1953), p. 537.
4 Ibid.
5 H. Cantril (ed.), Public Opinion 1935-1946 (Princeton, 1951), p. 411.
6 R. H. Dawson, The Decision to Aid Russia, 1941: Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics (University of Carolina Press, 1959), p. 80.

these conflicting reactions. The State Department advised him to remember the differences of the past, to treat Russian approaches with reserve and to shun concessions of principle made simply to improve relations.[1] The Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, however, advised Roosevelt to give Russia 'all aid to the hilt'[2] and senior members of the Admiralty advocated exploitation of the situation. These were the counsels Roosevelt heeded, and he quickly moved to the support of the Soviet Union. In a manner later described as 'sympathetic, expedient, and cautious',[3] he told the Press on 23 July that:

> In the opinion of this Government. . . any defense against Hitlerism, any rallying of the forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever source these forces spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders, and will therefore redound to the benefit of our own defense and security.
>
> Hitler's armies are today the chief dangers of the Americas.[4]

This public statement was soon followed by gestures of practical support. On 26 June it was announced that the Neutrality Law would not be invoked, 'a most effective piece of inaction'[5] which ensured that Vladivostock would remain open to American shipping. At the same time it was revealed that $40 million worth of Soviet assets in the United States would be unfrozen.[6] The Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, meanwhile on the same day, 26 July, told the Soviet ambassador, Constantine Oumansky, that requests for assistance would receive as prompt and favourable consideration as possible. Within four days the ambassador had responded with requests for huge quantities of military and industrial items, including some 3,000 fighters and 3,000 bombers.[7] An interdepartmental committee was set up within the State Department to deal with those requests for aid other than military items.[8]

Roosevelt made it clear that the administration's approach was to be generous. On 9 July he directed Welles that substantial aid must be sent to the Soviet Union before 1 October,[9] and he confirmed

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1 Ibid., p. 60. See also Langer and Gleason, p. 531.
2 Quoted in Dawson, p. 116.
3 J. M. Burns, Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom (New York, 1970), p. 103.
4 Langer and Gleason, p. 541.
5 Burns, p. 103.
6 Langer and Gleason, p. 541; Dawson, p. 122.
7 Lukas, pp. 26-7.
8 Dawson, p. 129.
9 Ibid., p. 142.

this with the Soviet ambassador on the following day.[1] Fighter aircraft, he said to Oumansky, should be able to be delivered rapidly.[2] Soon the question of aid to the Russians had graduated to the Division of Defence Aid Reports, responsible for the administration of Lend-Lease, and a special section there was established under a former military attaché to the Soviet Union, Colonel Philip R. Faymonville.[3]

By the time the British decided to send the Russians Tomahawks, therefore, the outlines of U.S. policy were clear. Roosevelt, though acting cautiously in view of his country's neutrality and some public hostility to communism,[4] was determined to support Soviet resistance. However, the War Department was far from reconciled to this, and offered 'considerable resistance' to the moves made by the executive early in July.[5] The General Staff of the U.S. army was deeply concerned at its own shortage of munitions. Its equipment programme was already one year behind schedule,[6] and it feared that British and Lend-Lease contracts for munitions would put the programme even further into arrears. In July more aircraft from U.S. production were to go to Britain than to the U.S.A.A.F. itself.[7] Moreover, the forces which in the ABC talks with the British in January 1941 had been predicted for completion by 1 September were now to be ready only in March 1942.[8] To meet even this deadline, the Chief of Staff, General George Marshall, had decided on 1 July that only 20 per cent of U.S. production should be allocated to Defence Aid until all equipment necessary for the Protective Mobilisation Plan and one month's combat maintenance were in the hands of U.S. troops.[9] The idea of diverting any munitions to the Red Army was therefore strongly resisted. Stimson complained in his diary about those people who were 'just hellbent to satisfy a passing impulse or emotion to help out some other nation that is fighting on our side', and who had 'no responsibility over whether or not our own army and our own forces are

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1 Lukas, p. 28.
2 Viscount Halifax to FO, no. 3956, 10 July 1941, WO 193/655.
3 Dawson, p. 151; Lukas, p. 29.
4 For discussion of the Catholic attitude, see Dawson, particularly pp. 92-5.
5 Ibid., p. 154.
6 R. M. Leighton and R. W. Coakley, Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943 (Washington, 1955), p. 70.
7 Lukas, p. 32.
8 Leighton and Coakley, p. 73.
9 Ibid., p. 93.

going to be left unarmed or not'.[1] Marshall meanwhile told the Chief of the Army Air Forces, Major-General H. H. Arnold, on 16 July that he was:

> . . . unalterably opposed to the release of any U.S. pursuit planes and light and medium bombers until we have first established units of these types in the Philippines for the security of the Fleet Anchorage, and the defense of the Islands. . . . At the present moment, with Japan's known preparations to move South, the Philippines become of great strategic importance . . .[2]

When on the following day Marshall learnt that the President had 'ordered' a token release of P-40 fighters and some light bombers to the Soviet Union, he complained bitterly: 'are we to risk the Philippine situation or the Brazilian situation, or the clamor of the press in this country or the purely military requirements of training our own field forces in this country?'[3]

Roosevelt soon gave him an answer. The War Department recommended on 21 July that the United States should supply the Russians with only a few fighters, no bombers, a small quantity of anti-aircraft guns, some aeroplane gasoline and lubricants, as well as one-third of the requested raw materials and almost one-half of the industrial plants the Russians wanted for the production of munitions.[4] But three days later, on the President's authority, the Under Secretary of State told Oumansky that 'a number' of Lockheed-Hudson bombers and 'at least a squadron' of P-40s would be supplied to the Soviet Union;[5] and on 31 July Roosevelt himself confirmed with Soviet representatives the British offer of 200 Tomahawks.[6] The following day he told his Cabinet, 'Get 'em (planes), even if it is necessary to take them from (U.S.) troops',[7] and on 2 August, notes were formally exchanged with the U.S.S.R. to the effect that the United States 'has decided to give all economic assistance practicable for the purpose of strengthening the Soviet Union in its struggle against armed aggression'.[8]

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1 F. C. Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope (New York, 1966), p. 73.
2 Lukas, p. 31.
3 Ibid., p. 32. Marshall thought it a definite possibility that the United States might be forced to occupy Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil in the event of a pro-Nazi coup in Brazil (Gwyer, p.127).
4 Precis of telegram from W'ton to U.S. embassy, London, AIR 2/5333.
5 Lukas, p. 34.
6 Ibid., p. 35.
7 Langer and Gleason, p. 561.
8 Dawson, p. 160.

By early August, therefore, the governments of the United States and Great Britain were converging on the question of aid to the Soviet Union. The differences over the supply of spare parts for the 200 Tomahawks at this time sprang not from any dispute between Roosevelt and Churchill but from the struggle between the War Department and the President. For this reason it was significant that at the end of July the President's adviser, Hopkins, made an impromptu visit to the Soviet Union. The frank admission of need which Stalin made during this meeting, as well as his willingness to divulge some details of Soviet production and resources, made the military's opposition in the West seem less reasonable. Moreover it strengthened Roosevelt's - and Churchill's - hand against the complaints of the Service departments that not enough was known about Soviet potential to justify sending munitions. Stimson, for one in the United States, had used this argument. He had warned Oumansky several times of the dangers of ignoring the Service attachés in Moscow and of refusing to take them into the Red Army's confidence: 'You have taken away my eyes and until I get my eyes back, I cannot take the responsibility of recommending giving away our weapons', he said to the ambassador on 29 July.[1] In London, too, the Secretary of State for Air told Maisky on 26 July,

> The Chiefs of Staff and the Defence Committee would not . . . be able to consider the release of any further aircraft unless the Soviet Government were prepared to provide the fullest possible information of their air strength and production in order that our relative needs might be compared.[2]

Sinclair himself was acting on assurances from the Director of Plans at the Air Ministry that :

> the release of 200 Tomahawks has already cost us more than we can rightly afford and that there is no chance of our being able to consider further supplies of aircraft at a later date unless the Russians confide in us complete information as to their present strength, reserves and potential.[3]

In welcoming Hopkins, therefore, the Russians for once struck exactly the right note. Stalin's openness, the enthusiasm of the Russian press[4] and the lavishness of the reception all convinced Hopkins - and with him Roosevelt and Churchill - of the Soviet

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1 Dawson, p. 137.
2 Mtg between SOS Air and Maisky, 26 July 1941, AIR 2/5333.
3 29 July 1941, AIR 2/5333.
4 Langer and Gleason, p. 564.

Union's need for assistance and of its determination to resist. Stalin was convincingly realistic, admitting weakness but not succumbing to despair, asking for immediate assistance but combining this with long-term demands which showed a healthy intention to maintain resistance.[1] On the positive side, Stalin claimed that the Red Army had been underestimated by the Wehrmacht; at the outbreak of war, he said, it had had 180 divisions to 175 German and now the ratio was 240 Russian to 232 German. Admittedly, Stalin went on, many of the Soviet divisions had been deployed too far back but this, he said, forgetting his telegram to Churchill on 19 July, was advantage: the line which the Red Army now held was more propitious than that it might have taken up if better prepared. A further factor in the Red Army's favour was the primitive state of Russian transportation. The Wehrmacht would find, after its initial successes, that Russian terrain was difficult, the roads and bridges too weak to bear its 70-ton tanks, and the problems of fuel supply acute.

However, Stalin admitted, there were many problems confronting the Red Army too. The chief of these was its shortage of modern equipment. At the outbreak of war, he said, the Germans had had 30,000 tanks compared to 24,000 Russian, and tank losses on both sides since then had been large. Soviet production at present stood at 1,000 tanks a month, equally divided between heavy and medium tanks on the one hand and light on the other; but in the coming winter Germany would be able to outproduce the Soviet Union. The help of the United States, therefore, both in supplying steel and manufacturing tanks, was essential. He would like, Stalin said, to give his tank designs and send a tank expert to the United States.

This was a new emphasis on tanks. Previously Soviet requests had stressed the need for aircraft and anti-aircraft weapons; but doubtless the battle then raging around Smolensk had claimed a heavy toll of Soviet armour. At the time the Russians admitted to losing some 685 tanks, but the Germans claimed 3,000 destroyed,[2] a figure shown by post-war analysis to be more accurate.[3]

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1 A full description of this meeting is found in Sherwood, pp. 335-43. The following description is based on this, unless otherwise stated.

2 Alexander Werth, Russia at War 1941-1945 (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1965), pp. 174-5.

3 Seaton, The Russo-German War, p. 130.

The new emphasis on tanks, however, did not mean a decline in Russian demands for aircraft. Stalin continued to press for these, virtually admitting the Soviet Air Force's inferiority to the Luftwaffe. He would not divulge, to Hopkins, Russia's losses since 22 June, but he confessed the Germans had more aircraft; and though many of these were obsolescent, some, the Junker 88 in particular, outclassed anything the Russians possessed. The Soviet Air Force in fact was mostly obsolescent: of the new fighters, the M.I.G.3, the L.A.G.3 and the J.K.1, details of which Stalin revealed, the air force had only 2,000. Its main holding, 7,000-8,000 aeroplanes, was of the older types. In bombers also, Stalin admitted, there was a shortage: of the three types of medium bombers, only one was just coming into production in any quantity, while holdings of long-range bombers stood at six hundred. Total production of aircraft was 1,800 machines a month, and Stalin expected this to rise to 2,500 by 1 January 1942 in the ratio of 40 per cent bombers, 60 per cent fighters. What the Soviet Union needed from the West he said, was anti-aircraft guns, machine-guns for city defence, rifles, high octane gasoline and aluminium for aircraft production. 'Give us the anti-aircraft guns and the aluminium', Stalin said, 'and we can fight for three to four years'.

Hopkins stressed to the Soviet leader that before these demands could be met, the United States and the United Kingdom would have to be informed about the military situation in the Soviet Union. They would have to know the type, number and quality of Russian weapons, their raw material resources and their factory capacity. He suggested that a conference be held at the end of September or early in October to discuss these questions when the Soviet front had stabilized. To this Stalin readily agreed. He promised not only the information Hopkins requested, but even designs of Soviet planes, tanks and guns. What is more, he said, he would welcome any operational assistance the West could give, be it British bombers operating against Romanian oil fields, or American troops operating 'under the complete command of the American army'. The impression Hopkins left Moscow with was of a government which had the determination and capacity to resist and which would prove reasonable and co-operative if treated in like manner. This impression he took straight to the meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland. There in early August the policies of the two governments on aid to Russia converged and a long-term policy of supply emerged.

According to Roosevelt's son, who was at the Atlantic meeting, this happened only because of American determination. Writing after the war,[1] he insisted that throughout this conference the British opposed the sending of munitions to the Red Army. There is ample evidence, however, that this was not the case. All contemporary records show that Churchill and his advisers came to Newfoundland convinced that aid to the Russians must be continued and increased. Whatever reservations the Chiefs of Staff had felt had been silenced - apparently by the events of the preceding week. For by early August it was clear that the Russians were not collapsing. On the contrary, though losing heavily, they were 'resisting strongly' and clearly disrupting the Wehrmacht's time-table for conquest.[2] Their claim on Allied help grew more deserving and insistent with every day that passed. However, at this very time the chances Britain had of offering the Soviet forces operational relief grew more remote. On 1 August the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, General Claude Auchinleck, convinced the Defence Committee after many weeks of argument that no offensive could be launched in the Middle East before the month of November.[3] Then the Chief of Air Staff rejected Stalin's plea for action against Romanian oil. Since the bombers were needed to disrupt enemy supply lines in the Middle East, since no force could be operational before the winter, and since Russian information about their aerodromes was scarce, Air Marshal C. F. A. Portal vetoed the operation without hesitation.[4] Britain was left again with bombing, blockade and subversion as their weapons of offence. Their review of strategy for the Atlantic meeting acknowledged their dependence on both the Soviet Union and the United States.

> The strength and duration of Russian resistance still remain in doubt. While we do not believe that a successful continuance of the resistance changes our fundamental strategy, it will have a profound effect on our immediate prospects. . .
>
> The intervention of the United States would revolutionise the whole situation . . . United States intervention would not only make victory certain, but might also make it swift.[5]

This is the key to the British attitude at the Atlantic conference. They recognized that Russian resistance was valuable

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1 E. Roosevelt, As he saw it (New York, 1946).
2 WP(41)179, 24 July 1941, WP(41)189, 7 Aug. 1941, CAB 66/18.
3 For a full discussion of this debate see Gwyer, pp. 176-82.
4 COS(41)488, 13 Aug. 1941, CAB 80/29.
5 COS(41)155(O), 31 July 1941, CAB 80/59.

and worthy of their aid; but they acknowledged they could offer help only with American support. Without U.S. production victory was remote, and without it also, the supply programme to the Soviet Union could not advance beyond the allocations of raw materials and quarter-master supplies already made in July.[1] Therefore, despite Elliot Roosevelt's assertions, the British were not 'hard at it' throughout the conference 'trying to convince (the Americans) to divert more and more and more Lend-Lease supplies to the United Kingdom and less and less and less to the Soviet Union'.[2] Dill, Pound and Freeman[3] did not hammer 'at the idea that war material to the Soviets was destined to be just war material captured by the Nazis, and that American self-interest dictated a channeling of the bulk of the supplies into England'.[4] If anything the situation was the opposite. It was the British who urged the extension of aid to the Russians and the Americans who opposed such a course.

Admittedly the C.I.G.S. did suggest at the first military meeting of the conference that anything the Allies could spare the Russians would be but a drop in the ocean, given the scale of Soviet tank production.[5] But Marshall and Arnold surpassed Dill in urging caution. Their first concern was with the U.S. armoured forces and the defence of the Philippines. Marshall told the meeting that of the four U.S. armoured divisions two had 80 per cent equipment and the other two only forty tanks for 25,000 men. Furthermore, two armoured divisions were due to be formed in October, and the Philippines had no tanks at all. The shortage of aircraft there was also acute, while many of the service units had no aeroplanes to fly. Only in recent months had it proved possible to send any modern aircraft to Hawaii, Panama or the Philippines. Marshall's caution was echoed by Arnold. He thought that only 25 per cent of any aircraft despatched to the Soviet Union were likely to reach the Russian front,[6] and if Stalin boasted to Hopkins a production of 1,800 aircraft a month and an air force of 9,000 planes, then 'We

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1 See Churchill, III, pp. 345-6.
2 Roosevelt, pp. 33-4. As T. A. Wilson has observed in The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941 (Boston, 1969) this is inaccurate even in the minor point that the Soviet Union was not eligible for Lend-Lease supplies until 7 November 1941 (p. 140).
3 Vice-Chief of Air Staff.
4 Roosevelt, loc. cit.
5 Mtg of 9 Aug. 1941 in COS(41)504, CAB 80/30.
6 Ibid.

should ask them for help'.[1] It was a Briton, Freeman, who defended the Russians against this attack. The moral effect of granting aircraft, he suggested, would be great, and for this reason the British had sacrificed the two hundred Tomahawks. 'It was all very well to let the Russians have a token supply of aircraft', Marshall replied, 'but that same number would be a godsend in the Philippines'.[2]

To the Americans, it seems, the answer to this scarcity of munitions lay in a reduction of British demands. They agreed to provide 1,460 tanks for Britain before the end of the year,[3] but it was clear they questioned the sending of these to the Middle East. As had emerged during Hopkins's talks in London, they questioned the strategic value of this theatre,[4] and Marshall now said that, considering Russian demands were likely to be great, 'the loss and wastage of the Middle East could not be borne for long'. Admiral Stark supported him, arguing that a complete re-evaluation of priorities was needed.[5]

Roosevelt, however, supported the British. Not only did he share their belief in the value of the Middle East, as shown by the financial support he gave to the development of an air ferrying route through west Africa,[6] but he wished to assist the Russians. His military advisers had therefore to defer. At a meeting on 10 August, Marshall and Stark agreed with Dill and Pound that if Russia held out her demands would necessitate an increase in American production - although, they added, the amount of aid given to the Soviet Union would be limited by the difficulties of transporting it there.[7] Roosevelt and Churchill seized on this concession. On 11 August the Prime Minister drafted instructions for Beaverbrook (due to arrive in north America that day) to stay in Washington, 'to spur and enlarge the whole scale of American production'.[8]

> . . . the arrival of Russia as an active partner against Hitler will require not only certain readjustments of British orders, original and supplementary, but also a very considerable expansion of plants and installations

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1 Wilson, p. 140.
2 Mtg of 9 Aug., loc. cit.
3 Ibid.
4 Langer and Gleason, pp. 563, 591.
5 Wilson, pp. 147-8.
6 Langer and Gleason, p. 590.
7 COS(41)504, CAB 80/30.
8 Churchill, III, p. 396.

> for the longer-term policy. . . . It would seem indispensable that the re-equipment of the Russian armies should be studied at once upon the grand scale. . .[1]

On the following day he cabled the Lord Privy Seal, Clement Attlee,

> Arrival of Russia as a welcome guest at hungry table and need of large supplementary programmes both for ourselves and the United States (sic) forces makes review and expansion of United States (sic) production imperative.[2]

Roosevelt agreed, and together he and Churchill sent a decisive message to Stalin on 12 August.

> We are at the moment co-operating to provide you with the very maximum of supplies that you most urgently need. . . . In order that all of us may be in a position to arrive at speedy decisions as to the apportionment of our joint resources we suggest that we prepare for a meeting to be held in Moscow . . . we want you to know that, pending the decisions of that conference, we shall continue to send supplies and materials as rapidly as possible.
>
> We realise fully how vitally important to the defeat of Hitlerism is the brave and steadfast resistance of the Soviet Union, and we feel therefore that we must not in any circumstances fail to act quickly and immediately in this matter of planning the programme for the future allocation of our joint resources.[3]

With this message, which was made public,[4] the British and the United States governments were committed to supplying the Soviet Union. However, the controversy surrounding the question was far from over. The details of the commitment, like many other questions of strategy, were left undecided at the Atlantic conference, and it was to take two more months of bitter argument before these details were hammered out.

One of the problems confronting the Allies was the lack of information about Soviet resources. After Stalin's well-timed admissions to Hopkins, the flow of information from Moscow shrank to a trickle. The one and only meeting of a three-man committee set up in Washington early in August to discuss Soviet requirements was not constructive. Oumansky, representing the Soviet Union, demanded statistics of British and American production, but also insisted that 'each country's requirements as stated

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1 Churchill, III, pp. 762-3.
2 Ibid., p. 397.
3 Ibid., pp. 394, 396.
4 FO to Moscow, no. 1040, 14 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29569 N4541/3084/38.

must be accepted by the others'.[1] The implication was that the United States and Great Britain should not delve too deeply into questions of Soviet resources and losses. The British military mission in Moscow certainly met great difficulties when it tried to obtain such information. Throughout June and July Macfarlane and his colleagues had to rely on official communiques for all information about the fighting on the Eastern Front, and these reports were always vague and optimistic, despite the critical situation in the Ukraine.[2] Macfarlane did get on 20 August the visit to the front which Stalin had promised him at the signing of the Anglo-Soviet treaty early in July;[3] but though the British general gained a favourable impression, he acquired no information about Soviet reserves or production.[4] He pointed out to the Russians the 'stupidity' of their withholding 'information required to help the forthcoming Moscow Conference in its work until the conference actually meets';[5] but the Soviet government remained uncommunicative.

To this problem was added the ill-preparedness of the American administration. This had been disorganized since the sudden demands of the Lend-Lease legislation in March[6] and was not yet mobilized either to assess Russian needs or to accurately determine its own. The President had ordered on 9 July that a study of the United States' requirements for eventual victory over 'its potential enemies' - the 'Victory Programme' - should be prepared, but this complex task was not completed until 25 September.[7] Lacking this information, the Americans feared at one stage that they would not be ready for the conference in Moscow until mid-October.[8]

Such a date, however, was politically unacceptable. Maisky, soon after the Atlantic conference, pressed for an earlier date at the end of August,[9] and there was considerable public pressure for immediate and visible action. A public opinion survey taken

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1 MISC(41)1/1, 4 Aug. 1941, CAB 78/1. The British themselves would not delegate responsibility to their representative on the committee. (See Gwyer, p. 149).
2 War diary of no. 30 Military Mission, June, July 1941, WO 178/25.
3 Ibid.
4 WP(41)204, CAB 66/18.
5 Macfarlane to COS, MIL 819, 16 Sept. 1941, WO 193/664. Macfarlane had spoken to the Soviet liaison officer to this effect at least once before this.
6 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 78-80.
7 Langer and Gleason, pp. 737-8.
8 WM(41)87th concl., 28 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29572 N4920/3084/38.
9 Minute Eden to PM, 22 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29571 N4781/3084/38.

over a large London sample from 27 July to 4 August, for instance, showed that as many as four in every ten persons believed that the government was not doing enough to support the Soviet Union (the number varying according to the fluctuations in Soviet fortunes).[1] Public demonstrations of enthusiasm for the Russian cause were also becoming common. As a correspondent told Joseph Davies, the ex-U.S.-ambassador to the Soviet Union:

> For many months past we have been hoping and anticipating the entry of the United States into the war. Now I fear it is a case of 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick'. . . only a few days ago a Member of Parliament told me that he had tried deliberately to evoke cheers for the U.S. with little or no response, but that when he alluded to Russia there was an immediate reaction which almost took the roof off the building.[2]

In these circumstances the British urged the Americans to agree to an earlier meeting in Moscow. The Foreign Secretary, with the Cabinet's approval, suggested to Winant late in August that the date of the conference should be set at 15 September.[3] As Eden explained elsewhere, he believed that a long delay would 'only give the Russians the impression that we are not confident of their ability to hold and are watching and waiting to see their fate. This is surely the last impression that we want to convey'.[4] The 15 September, however, proved impracticable; the date finally chosen had to be a compromise, 28 September, as originally mooted during Hopkins' visit to Moscow.

The British found the delay increasingly embarrassing. The Soviet government was obviously disappointed at the postponement of the conference,[5] and by the end of August rumours were circulating in Moscow that the meeting had been put off.[6] Maisky meanwhile pressed in London for immediate supplies of armaments, saying bluntly that Britain had done 'very little' for 'the general cause'.[7] The British government, therefore, agreed to further

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1 T. Harrison, 'Public opinion about Russia', Political Quarterly, vol. XII (1941), p. 362.
2 From the Davies papers, quoted in Wilson, p. 29.
3 Sir Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, vol. II, (London: HMSO, 1971), p. 35.
4 Minute to PM, 28 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29572 N4920/3084/38.
5 Sir S. Cripps, no. 1108, 7 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29573 N5114/3084/38. Cripps was a strong advocate of an early conference as a morale booster in Moscow (Sir S. Cripps, no. 1026, 23 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29571 N4766/3084/38).
6 Sir S. Cripps, no. 1037, 27 Aug. 1941, N4852/3084/38, ibid.
7 26 Aug. 1941, quoted in FO survey of Anglo-Soviet exchanges, FO 371 29471, N6654/3/38.

stop-gap measures. Even though committed to offering supplies at the forthcoming conference, Churchill asked the Chiefs of Staff in the last week of August to part with a further 200 fighters, this time Hurricanes. The military's reaction was cautious. They admitted that the offer would not seriously deplete the supply of aircraft at home, but their sense of military economy rebelled against it.

> . . . the direct military value to us of Russia having these aircraft is not high.
>
> It is not possible to assess the indirect military value to us . . . but clearly if their arrival puts heart into Russians and keeps them fighting the Germans a little longer we benefit.
>
> On purely military grounds, however, the Chiefs of Staff consider that these aircraft would pay a better dividend if sent to the Far East or Middle East and/or Turkey.

They concluded, however, with the admission that the Chiefs of Staff realized that political considerations might be overriding.[1]

They were. Churchill decided, nowithstanding military reservations, that the Hurricanes should be offered to the Red Army. He told Stalin so on 29 August in a message which promised also two R.A.F. squadrons (of 40 Hurricanes) in Murmansk by 6 September.[2] This was another politically motivated offer to which the Chiefs of Staff had agreed just as reluctantly some weeks earlier. The squadrons were intended to assist in the defence of Murmansk and co-operate with Soviet forces in the Murmansk area, although their military value was expected to be 'low' owing to the lack of a stable line of communications with Britain.[3]

These offers did little to ease the Soviet pressure for help. In his reply on 3 September Stalin thanked Churchill for the offer 'to sell' the Soviet Union the Hurricanes, but he stressed that these aircraft would not bring about 'serious changes' on the Eastern front. The scale of the war was too large for this, and only 'a continuous supply of a large quantity of aeroplanes' could offer real relief. Yet, he admitted, in the last few months the Soviet Union had lost much of its potential to produce these aircraft - the Krivoi Rog iron basin, metallurgical works in the Ukraine, one aluminium works on the Dnieper River, one at Tikhvin, two aircraft works in the Ukraine and two at Leningrad.

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1 Draft minute to PM, COS(41)301st mtg, 27 Aug. 1941, CAB 79/14. These objections were raised at COS(41)29th mtg (O), 28 Aug. 1941, CAB 79/55.
2 Churchill, III, pp. 403-4.
3 Air Ministry to 30 MM, X.462, 4 Aug. 1941, CAB 79/13.

These losses, he said, were the result of the Wehrmacht's freedom to reinforce its troops in the Soviet Union from those in the West where the threat of invasion was merely 'a bluff'.

> I think that there is only one means of egress from this situation - to establish in the present year a second front somewhere in the Balkans or France. . . and at the same time of ensuring to the Soviet Union 30,000 tons of aluminium by the beginning of October next and a monthly minimum of aid amounting to 400 aircraft and 500 tanks (of small or medium size).[1]

For once it was Churchill's turn to be unsympathetic. Stalin's reply angered him, particularly as it was delivered by Maisky who claimed that Russia had been fighting 'virtually alone' for the last eleven weeks.[2] His old distrust of the Soviet government welled up in Churchill again, and he said to the ambassador: 'Remember that only four months ago we in this island did not know whether you were not coming in against us on the German side. Indeed, we thought it quite likely that you would . . . Whatever happens and whatever you do, you of all people have no right to make reproaches to us'.[3] In his annoyance the Prime Minister drafted an answer to Stalin stating plainly that the military operations the Russians proposed were out of the question; that although Britain would do her best as regards supplies, the actual amount of aid reaching the Soviet Union in time to influence current operations would be small; and that it was only in 1942 that substantial assistance, either operationally or in supplies, could be expected.[4]

In the Cabinet meeting the next day, however, Churchill relented. It was clear the Red Army's position was critical. Stalin himself had referred in his message to 'a mortal menace' to his state,[5] and intelligence estimates confirmed that Soviet losses of industrial potential had been crippling.[6] Furthermore British representatives in Moscow fully supported the Soviet leader's pleas for help. Macfarlane had warned the C.I.G.S. only a few days earlier that

> to the Russians it must appear that we are concerned only with helping them with intelligence and munitions. And that we are still largely content to leave the operational initiative to the Germans . . . Our alliance with Russia may be fortuitous but we cannot hope to beat the Germans

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1 Churchill, III, pp. 405-6.
2 Ibid., p. 406.
3 Ibid., p. 407.
4 Gwyer, p. 147.
5 Churchill, III, p. 405.
6 FO to W'ton, no. 4862, 22 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29571 N4707/3084/38; FO to W'ton, no. 4801, 30 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29572 N4903/3084/38.

if we go on fighting separate wars.[1]

Cripps wrote in a similar vein on the day of Stalin's telegram. A week before he had thought 'there is no question of the Russians giving in',[2] but now he said:

> We have unfortunately considered the war here as no direct responsibility of ours, but merely as a war which we desired to assist in any way that we could, without unduly endangering our own position . . . I fear it is now almost too late unless we are prepared to throw everything in, in an effort to save this front.[3]

The Cabinet knew, however, that the evidence against any co-ordinated military effort was overwhelming. Every conceivable operation on the Continent had been rejected by the Chiefs of Staff on the 23 August - Kirkenes to Murmansk; Northern and Southern Norway; Holland; France, from the River Scheldt to the River Somme, from the Somme to the Seine, the Cherbourg Peninsula, the Channel Islands, Brittany and the Bay of Biscay coast. 'No operation which we can stage with the forces and equipment now available', they had concluded, 'will make the Germans withdraw from the East',[4] Even Churchill had come to accept that this was so, and the Cabinet agreed at this meeting on 5 September that there was no escape from the Chiefs' of Staff conclusions.

Predictably it then resorted to greater and more spectacular offers of munitions. At Beaverbrook's suggestion the Cabinet decided to offer immediately half of the 400 aircraft and 500 tanks that Stalin had requested each month. The other half, it trusted, the United States would provide.[5] Without heeding the Air Ministry's anxieties, without considering the War Office's reservations,[6] the Cabinet incorporated this offer into Churchill's reply to Stalin. It emphasised that little could be hoped for militarily from Britain until 1942 when some forces might assist the southern Russian flank; but in the meantime the promised supplies would be

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1 MIL 580, 31 Aug. 1941, WO 178/25.
2 Cripps to FO, no. 145, 29 Aug. 1941, WO 193/649. He had been profoundly influenced at that time by the destruction of the Dnieprostroi Dam, which indicated a ruthless implementation of the scorched earth policy.
3 Moscow to FO, no. 1090, 4 Sept. 1941, CAB 105/35.
4 JP(41)691, COS(41)299th mtg, min. 2, CAB 79/13.
5 WM(41)90th concl., min. 3, confidential annex, 5 Sept. 1941, CAB 65/23.
6 WO brief on Availability and Requirements of Armoured Formations, 5 Nov. 1941, WO 193/580. The Minister for War, David Margesson, and the C.I.G.S., however, were present at this meeting, as were Portal and Sinclair.

made available as quickly as possible on terms similar to Lend-Lease.[1] A later telegram promised 5,000 tons of aluminium immediately and 2,000 tons a month thereafter.[2]

Without doubt this was a politically-motivated decision. Although the Red Army's situation was critical, little in practical terms could be achieved by this promise being made three weeks earlier than anticipated.[3] The Cabinet obviously meant its commitment to meet not the critical shortages of the moment but Maisky's insinuations that a separate peace might be concluded.[4] It aimed also at blunting criticism of the delays in the conference and at reinforcing the Soviet will to survive.

Regrettably this well-motivated decision was to cost Britain's Armed Services dear. It soon emerged that the United States War Department, from whom the Cabinet expected an offering of 250 tanks and 200 aircraft a month for the Russians, did not intend to make such sacrifices. Already Marshall's attempt to protect the U.S. Army by allocating only 20 per cent of production to Defence Aid contracts had been eroded by extra offers of tanks to Britain.[5] Consequently, although in principle the policy of supplying the Soviet Union was accepted in the War Department, there were considerable reservations there about the size of the U.S. commitment.[6] Roosevelt gave instructions on 30 August that he deemed it to be of

> paramount importance for the safety and security of America that all reasonable munitions help be provided for Russia, not only immediately but as long as she continues to fight the Axis powers effectively.[7]

In view of this the War Department adopted a new basis for calculating the requirements of the U.S. Armed Forces: base and task forces would be 100 per cent equipped by 30 June 1942, but forces in training would receive only 50 per cent of requirements. Three of the six armoured divisions planned and fifteen of the separate tank battalions would receive only 50 per cent of their tanks by January 1942, and the 6th Armoured Division would not be activated

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1 Churchill, III, p. 408.
2 Gwyer, p. 148.
3 Although immediate shipments of tanks were begun. Forty had left Britain by 17 Sept. 1941. (Minute Beaverbrook to PM, 17 Sept. 1941, AVIA 22/689.)
4 Churchill, III, p. 409.
5 See Leighton and Coakley, p. 94.
6 Lukas, p. 63.
7 Leighton and Coakley, p. 99.

until March 1942. These adjustments would allow the Russians to be offered over the same period 991 37mm guns, 150 90mm guns, 1,135 mortars, 20,000 sub-machine guns, 155,341 miles of telegraph wire and, most significantly for the British, 729 light tanks, 795 medium tanks and 1,200 aircraft.[1] There was thus a deficiency of 726 tanks and 600 aircraft between what the Americans were willing to sacrifice and what the British assumed they would provide. The other important difference between British and American calculations was that, in Washington's view, even the above offer of munitions was dependent on the British surrendering some portion of Defence Aid contracts. (Most of the 1,200 aircraft, for instance, were to come from Lend-Lease allocations.)[2] London, on the other hand, expected its supply of U.S. munitions to remain untouched.

These differences emerged starkly at the meeting of British and U.S. representatives in London from 15 September onwards. This conference had a dual purpose - to discuss Soviet needs and to assess Allied requirements for ultimate victory - and the British decided before the discussions opened that the two questions must not be linked. Fearful of finding Britain forced to make immediate sacrifices to the Soviet Union in exchange for promises of long-term aid, Beaverbrook and the Chiefs of Staff agreed on 13 September that they would concentrate first on securing guarantees that their own allocations from the United States would be met as promised.

Only then would they discuss the question of Soviet aid. The subject of long-term of victory requirements meanwhile would be left until the issue of short-term deliveries had been settled.[3]

The American delegation, headed by Averell Harriman, however, had other ideas. It brought with it schedules of what would be available for export from the United States and insisted on deciding first how much of this was to be allocated to the Soviet Union.[4] Beaverbrook's alternative procedure left the delegation 'thunderstruck' - ' a bald-faced bit of politics', one member called it,[5] and Harriman agreed. He insisted on deciding Russian

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1 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 99-100.
2 Ibid., p. 101.
3 Gwyer, p. 150.
4 Ibid., p. 151.
5 Colonel Victor Taylor, in conversation with the U.S. military attache to London, General Raymond E. Lee, 15 Sept. 1941. (The London Observer The Journal of General Raymond E. Lee 1940-1941 (London, 1972), p. 400.)

needs first, even though, as the British pointed out, these would be difficult to determine before the discussions in Moscow, and it might have been sounder in some cases for British theatres to be reinforced with American equipment while the British supplied the Russians.[1]

Harriman's decision had profound implications. Under the terms of the agreement between Arnold and Air Marshal J. C. Slessor in March 1941 the Air Ministry had expected to receive in the nine months to July 1942 some 9,000 to 9,500 aircraft; 6,000 of these were to come from British contracts in the United States, 3,000 from Lend-Lease contracts (of which Britain had almost a monopoly, with the exception of a small allotment to China), and the remainder from surplus U. S. Army production.[2] The figures the American delegation now presented, as shown in the table below, shattered all these hopes.

Type of aircraft	Total U.S. production available for export*	Allocations proposed by U.S. Govt.					Estimated production in period		
		U.K.	Russia	China	Others	U.S.A.A.F.	U.S.	U.K.	Total
Heavy bomber	238	188	30	10	10	532	770	1527	2297
Medium bomber	941	831	45	15	50	779	1720	2682	4402
Light and Dive bomber	3382	2710	356	119	197	394	3776	934	4710
Fighter	4765	3611	620	207	327	2599	7364	7514	14878
Observation	382	194	112	38	38	331	713	-	713
TOTAL	9708	7534	1163	389	622	4635	14343	12657	27000

* Including British contracts
Source: COS(41)207(O), CAB 80/59.

The British were dismayed. The Americans had abandoned the Slessor agreement for a new and arbitrary percentage system: 50 per cent of Defence Aid was assigned to Britain, 30 per cent to

1 BH(41)1st mtg, 15 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/6.
2 Duncan Hall, p. 314; Gwyer, p. 152.

the Soviet Union, and the remaining 20 per cent to China and other nations; 7.5 per cent of U.S. Army Air Force orders, meanwhile, were allotted to the British, 4.5 per cent to the Russians, and 3 per cent to the others.[1] Such allocations seemed to the British to violate the fundamental military principle of concentration at the point of greatest strategic need. The dispersion of heavy bombers, in particular, seemed senselessly uneconomical. Thirty were to go to the Soviet Union and ten to China. 'All experience', the British argued to the Americans, 'shows that small numbers cannot be employed with economy of effort'.[2] So few bombers would be 'quite useless' to the Russians, since it would not be worth their while to start this new type in service.[3] Furthermore, the British argued, the Soviet Air Force could only undertake strategic bombardment of the Romanian oil fields, and these, at the rate of German advance, would probably soon be out of range.[4] The American General James E. Chaney disagreed. Although the War Department itself had resisted supplying heavy bombers at first,[5] Chaney now argued that such aircraft might form the basis of a squadron to bomb Japan in the future;[6] they would also be of value in stimulating Russian morale.[7] The roles were strangely reversed from those at the Atlantic conference, the British arguing against an uneconomic diversion, the Americans stressing the value of a token gesture to boost morale.

The reason for the British change of heart was the American decision to retain many heavy bombers in the United States.[8] Some of these, the Chiefs of Staff had hoped, might come to Britain, where heavy bomber production was lagging behind schedule;[9] but the Americans proved determined to keep the bombers for the Philippines, Hawaii and the Caribbean. Although the British presented counter-proposals which would have left the U.S.A.A.F with some 260 heavy bombers, Harriman refused to consider British allocations until the Russian offer had been decided.[10]

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1 Gwyer, p. 153.
2 BH(41)9, n.d.(c. 17 Sept, 1941), CAB 99/6.
3 BH(41)11, 17 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/6.
4 Lukas, p. 86.
5 Ibid., pp. 73-4.
6 BH(41)11, loc. cit.
7 BH(41)7, 16 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/6.
8 Leighton and Coakley, p. 101; COS(41)207(O), 17 Sept. 1941, CAB 80/59.
9 Postan, British War Production, pp. 124-6, 174.
10 BH(41)11, loc. cit.

Eventually a compromise was hammered out. At the British suggestion the American delegation raised its allocation to the Soviet Union from 1,163 aircraft to 1,800, the number necessary to ensure a supply of 200 aircraft a month until 30 June 1942.[1] These additional munitions were to be taken from U.S.A.A.F., not R.A.F., allocations and, it was decided some days later in Washington, would not include the thirty heavy bombers. These instead were to go to Britain[2] and the Russians were to receive roughly 900 fighters, 698 light and 72 medium bombers.[3]

This decision on aircraft was still a bitter blow for Britain; but it was almost overshadowed by the parallel reduction in supplies of tanks. Relying on Roosevelt's optimistic tank production schedules of July, the War Office had anticipated receiving in the next nine months not only 1,485 medium tanks on British contracts, but also 1,233 from Defence Aid.[4] However, American production had not lived up to expectations. Now, instead of 5,000 to 5,500 tanks, only 3,187 were thought likely to be produced by mid-1942.[5] This, together with the reduction of Britain's percentage of Lend-Lease, left the War Office with only 611 medium tanks additional to those on its own contracts.[6] This loss was dismaying enough; but the American allocation of 795 medium and 729 light tanks did not meet even half of Russian requirements. The British therefore, had to sacrifice a further 726 light tanks to meet the deficiency,[7] on the understanding that they would receive a substantial increase when American production rose.[8] They justified doing this on the grounds that Roosevelt, informed by Harriman of the acrimony entering the discussions, peremptorily ordered American tank production to be doubled by 30 June 1942 and the delivery dates on existing programmes to be stepped up by 25 per cent.[9] Although the British were sceptical of Washington's optimistic schedules - as Beaverbrook observed, they had been promised forty medium tanks in September, and had received six[10] - they had no choice but to act on the assumption that this one was realistic.

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1 Lukas, p. 86.
2 Ibid., p. 90.
3 Leighton and Coakley, p. 101.
4 Gwyer, p. 151.
5 DO(41)11, 22 Sept. 1941, CAB 69/3.
6 Gwyer, pp. 151-2.
7 Ibid., p. 152.
8 Leighton and Coakley, p. 100.
9 Ibid.
10 DO(41)62nd mtg, min. 1, 19 Sept. 1941, CAB 69/2.

For by now they were acutely aware of the rigidity which their premature promise of 400 aircraft and 500 tanks a month had imposed on them. It was politically impossible to renege on their commitment, and yet it had been made on false assumptions. They had overestimated the willingness of the American Armed Services to be 'the arsenal of democracy', and had underestimated the concern the Americans felt at their position in the Philippines, the Caribbean and Hawaii. Their own loss to the Russians was much greater than ever intended, and for the Air Ministry at least, this was reason enough to reconsider the commitment. The promise of 200 fighters a month, it declared on 17 September, was made

> when British expectations from America were very much brighter than they now appear. In these circumstances, the Air Ministry consider that the most practicable solution would be to return to the original Defence Aid allocations . . . and any supply of aircraft additional to the fighters referred to above should be met from U.S. Army Air Orders.[1]

The Chiefs of Staff, however, knew that this was wishful thinking. Whatever the strain of Britain's sacrifice they knew it had to be borne, and the commitment to the Soviet Union could not be abrogated. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Air, Harold Balfour, describes the meeting of the Defence Committee on 19 September at which this was acknowledged:

> . . . At once it was clear that Churchill, Eden and Beaverbrook were the only ones on the positive side for aid. The Service Ministers and their Chiefs of Staff were on the negative side. The Air Ministry case was, though invasion danger was past, the air defences of Britain had to be kept up to strength and further expanded to meet the threat of heavier enemy raids. Bomber Command had to be built up. The Middle East was crying out for Hurricanes and Spitfires for the Western Desert. As for the R.A.F. so for the Army and Navy. Not a rowing boat, a rifle or a Tiger Moth could be spared without weakening and without grave risk. It was soon clear that the division between positives and negatives was acute.[2]

This is a colourful account of the meeting, to put it charitably. The more phlegmatic official minutes[3] show that Portal and Dill, and their respective Ministers, Sinclair and Margesson, did agree to accept the American proposals. They did so reluctantly[4] and

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1 BH(41)9, loc. cit. The fighters referred to were the 200 Tomahawks, 200 Hurricanes and two R.A.F. squadrons.
2 Lord Balfour of Inchrye, P.C., M.C., Wings over Westminster (London, 1973), p. 167.
3 DO(41)62nd mtg, min. 1, 19 Sept. 1941, CAB 69/2.
4 The Chiefs of Staff asked Beaverbrook to register 'their dismay' on the official record. (DO(41)11, 22 Sept. 1941, CAB 69/3.)

with considerable irritation, but this was directed more against the Americans than the Russians, and was felt by Beaverbrook too. Champion of aid for the Red Army he might be, but he resented almost as much the sacrifices demanded of Britain. The United States, he pointed out, 'at present . . . have only agreed to supply Russia with quantities which they can comfortably share'.

> The promise of four hundred aircraft and five hundred tanks a month . . . can be fulfilled by a sacrifice. This sacrifice will fall almost entirely on us.[1]

Indeed the British now faced a shortage of 1,613 tanks and 1,800 aircraft.[2] In practical terms this would mean the delaying of the formation of 3 armoured divisions and 1 armoured brigade until late in autumn,[3] and the loss over the next nine months of 20 heavy and medium bomber squadrons, 15 light bomber squadrons and 15 fighter squadrons.[4] This loss in bombers was particularly dismaying. The R.A.F. was now to receive only 49 heavy and 76 medium bombers more than those it had ordered itself from the United States,[5] and such reductions were 'likely to have a grave effect on the British air offensive against Germany'.[6] Fighter Command, meanwhile, would be immediately affected. It would have to surrender some aircraft to the Middle East and might consequently fall to a 'dangerously low' level in spring.[7] The Army Co-operation squadrons would not be able to be re-equipped with fighter reconnaissance types at the rate planned, and the offer of 500 aircraft to India, the Dominions and the Dutch would have to be abandoned. So also would the whole programme of light bomber expansion which had been planned for the nine-month period.[8]

The effect on the Middle East was less predictable. The whole organization there, as Portal explained to the Defence Committee, was built on the expectation of receiving Kittyhawks, and 'rather than lose these, we would surrender other planes, like Airacobras and Lightnings'.[9] Whether the Americans would agree to such

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1 DO(41)11, loc. cit. See also B. Bond (ed.) Chief of Staff The Diaries of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall, vol. II, 1940-1944 (London, 1974), p. 42.
2 Gwyer, p. 152.
3 DO(41)62nd mtg, loc. cit.
4 Gwyer, p. 152.
5 BH(41)9, loc. cit.
6 Duncan Hall, pp. 332-3.
7 DO(41)62nd mtg, loc. cit.
8 COS(41)207(O), 17 Sept. 1941, CAB 80/59.
9 DO(41)62nd mtg, loc. cit.

exchanges, in view of their attitude over heavy bombers, was unclear, but Portal intended, with the support of the Defence Committee, to negotiate with them on these lines in the little time left before the Moscow conference.[1] Only then, when the details of the aircraft to be offered had been settled, would the full impact on the Middle East be seen.

In general, the loss to the British Armed Services was little short of agonizing. It was therefore galling to find that this promise of aid, which cost so much, scarcely dulled Soviet complaints. When Cripps delivered Churchill's message of 5 September,[2] which promised the supplies, he found Stalin 'very depressed and tired' with 'some of the old attitude of suspicion and distrust'. The Russian leader refused to guarantee that the Soviet Union would hold out until the spring of 1942, even with the supplies the United Kingdom offered. After all, he claimed, the Germans had no need to take the Western front into consideration.[3]

Panfilov, the Soviet liaison officer for the army section of the mission in Moscow, took a similar line. In a meeting with Macfarlane he accused Britain of not pulling her weight in the war, and the 'whole atmosphere of this meeting showed a state of nervous tension and desire to criticise which is obviously the result of the present critical military situation'.[4]

The pressure continued in the following week. On 15 September Stalin again contacted Churchill, thanking him for the promised supplies; but pressing for military action. 'It seems to me', he said, 'that Great Britain could without risk land in Archangel twenty-five to thirty divisions, or transport them across Iran to the southern regions of the U.S.S.R.'[5] This was a hopelessly unrealistic suggestion. The port facilities at Archangel and the Persian Gulf were primitive, the road and rail communications across Iran backward, and the shipping to transport thirty divisions non-existent.[6] Furthermore Britain had little more than the suggested number of divisions in the United Kingdom itself, and less than half that number in the Middle East.[7] As the official

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1 DO(41)62nd mtg, loc. cit.
2 Churchill erroneously gives the date as 4 September (III, p. 407).
3 Woodward (Concise), pp. 254-5.
4 Macfarlane to COS, MIL 685, 8 Sept. 1941, WO 193/649.
5 Churchill, III, p. 411.
6 For the shortage of personnel shipping see C. B. A. Behrens, Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War (London: HMSO, 1955), p. 250.
7 Gwyer, p. 175; DO(41)12, 22 Sept. 1941, CAB 69/3.

historian says, 'Even if transport had been available, no Government could have considered such a proposition for a moment.'[1] The British government did not.

Nonetheless it was clear that the Soviet government needed reassurance. Possibly Stalin had made the suggestion because he overestimated Britain's strength,[2] or believed what his officers told Macfarlane - that there were only twenty German divisions in France, and those inferior.[3] But the more likely supposition was that Stalin doubted Allied promises of aid. On 19 September he told Cripps in a conversation about the problems of no. 30 Military Mission, that he questioned whether British tanks would ever arrive. U.S. aid he viewed even more sceptically, and though he said that 'he did not wish Great Britain to go short of war material needed for her own defence, either by sending material manufactured in England or by forgoing what she would otherwise have received from the U.S.A.', he left Cripps with the impression of mistrust. Stalin and his General Staff, the ambassador told London 'are still doubtful of the degree of help that we are going to give them, and . . . are inclined to underestimate the help that we have already given'.[4]

The conference in Moscow at the end of the month, therefore, had a political role to play almost as important as its military one. The British and American delegations had not only to determine the details of the munitions to be supplied but also to convince the Kremlin of the West's sincerity. To Beaverbrook, the head of the British delegation, the political role was particularly important, and thanks largely to his skill, it was more than fulfilled.

Churchill wrote of the Moscow conference after the war: the

> . . . reception was bleak and the discussions not at all friendly . . . The Soviet generals and officials gave no information of any kind to their British and American colleagues. They did not even inform them of the basis on which Russian needs of our precious war materials had

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1 Gwyer, p. 201.

2 Gwyer suggests Stalin may have been misled by Churchill's telegram of 5 September which referred to a force of ¾ million men in the Middle East. He may have calculated that, on the relatively sparse organization of the Red Army, Britain should have 25-30 divisions available for action in the Soviet Union. There is some evidence from German sources that the suggestion originated from Marshal Timoshenko, the Red Army's senior field - commander, and was therefore intended as a serious military suggestion (p. 202).

3 Macfarlane to COS, MIL 391, 15 Aug. 1941, AIR 8/568. The figures in September 1941 were 37 infantry and 1 Panzer division under OB. West and 31 Eratz divisions and 1 Panzer in Germany (Gwyer, p. 199n.).

4 Cripps to FO, no. 1170, 20 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29469 N5585/3/38.

> been estimated . . . it might almost have been we who had come to ask for favours.[1]

The reality, however, was very different. The Soviet government, as Balfour reported on his return, showed hospitality which was 'almost unprecedented': 'In every direction it was made clear to us that Russia welcomed the Mission and wished for a result of substantial aid'.[2] The Western delegates were feted with generosity not shown to Ribbentrop in August 1939,[3] and the final banquet at the Kremlin was of a kind not seen since the Revolution.[4] Stalin meanwhile enthused to Beaverbrook about the value of Allied supplies,[5] and Litvinov, dug up from obscurity to interpret and be a reminder of more amicable days, jumped from his seat when hearing of the mission's offer, and cried, 'Now we shall win the war'![6]

There were, of course, obstacles to agreement, and the conference followed the pattern which became familiar in later meetings of the three Powers of cordiality on the first day, truculence and hostility on the second, and resolution on the third. At this conference the difficulties of the second day presumably resulted from the Russians' disappointed hopes. In aircraft, for instance, they had hoped for a large allocation of bombers; 300 to every 100 fighters; but British and American calculations had been made on reverse proportions.[7] This disappointed the Russians. The Commissar for Aircraft Industries, Shakurin, had grossly inflated notions about American bomber production, which he estimated to be 1,000 to 1,200 a month. The figure for medium bomber production was in fact closer to 300 a month, and that mostly on British contracts, as Chaney explained to Shakurin at the second meeting of the Air Supply Committee. On learning this, the commissar reduced his demands, but only to 200 bombers a month. The British and American representatives persisted, suggesting that the Soviet Air Force use Hurricane and Kittyhawk fighters in a close-support bombardment role,[8] and pointing out that even the promised 100 bombers a month had been taken from

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1 Churchill, III, pp. 415-16.
2 WP(41)238, 8 Oct. 1941, CAB 66/19.
3 Balfour's Moscow Diary, 1 Oct. 1941, BB library.
4 W. Standley and A. Ageton, Admiral Ambassador to Russia (Chicago, 1955), p. 74 (quoting the Counselor of the U.S. embassy).
5 Sherwood, vol. 1, p. 391.
6 A. J. P. Taylor, Beaverbrook (London, 1972), p. 487. Despite this evidence, Churchill's myth has been perpetuated by recent writers. See A. B. Ulam, Stalin The Man and his Era (New York, 1973), p. 562.
7 Lukas, p. 94.
8 Lukas, pp. 94-5.

British contracts on the understanding they would be replaced later. Reluctantly Shakurin accepted the proposed ratio.

Still the difficulties remained. The Russians naturally preferred to receive one type of aircraft from each nation, thus minimizing the problems of spare parts, ground equipment and training. But they also preferred the modern Spitfire to the Hurricane, [1] and even further, cannon-bearing to machine-gun fighters.[2] The British could not meet this demand for both uniformity and modernity. The current production of Spitfires could not provide 200 a month in addition to R.A.F. needs,[3] and the Russians had therefore to accept either an operationally awkward combination of Hurricanes and Spitfires, or take the less desirable Hurricanes alone. Shakurin seemed to favour the first alternative;[4] but Stalin, apparently concerned at the practical problems involved, told Beaverbrook he did not want Spitfires.[5] Even with this concession he had to accept some mixed allocations; for although the Americans had enough Kittyhawks[6] to make the fighter allocation uniform, their 100 bombers had to be a mixture of B-25s, A-20s and A-29s.[7]

The allocation of tanks was less contentious, but still Russian expectations were disappointed. They stated at the Military Supply Committee that they wished to receive cruiser, infantry and light tanks in that order of preference;[8] but by far the majority of Allied supplies fell into the latter two categories. Furthermore, the Russians requested 1,100 tanks a month,[9] but the Allies could offer only 500 a month, supplemented by 200 tankettes or Bren carriers a month from the United Kingdom.

These disappointments in tanks and aircraft, however, did not prove a source of lasting disagreement. Within four days the conference had settled the major supply questions and been brought to a triumphant end. For this Beaverbrook is largely responsible,

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1 B.A.R.(A)2nd mtg, 30 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7. B.A.R.(A) refers to proceedings of the Air Supply Committee at the conference.)
2 B.A.R.(A)1, 30 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7.
3 B.A.R.(A)2nd mtg, loc. cit.
4 Ibid.
5 AM Whitehall to 30 MM, X.123, 24 Nov. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
6 The Russians preferred these fighters (Lukas, p. 96).
7 B.A.R.(A)1, loc. cit.
8 B.A.R.(M)2nd mtg, 30 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7. Although, according to Beaverbrook, Stalin was vague about what percentage of light tanks he wanted.(BB's account, 29 Sept. 1941, BB papers, box 20/6, Russia.)
9 Leighton and Coakley, p. 100; WP(41)238, 8 Oct. 1941. CAB 66/19.

for he refused consistently to allow any contentious issues to enter the discussions. He would not press the Russians for information to justify their needs, nor would he encourage the development of political or military discussions between Allied and Soviet representatives.

Cripps[1] and the members of the military mission were keen for him to do all these. They believed that Russian disclosures would rationalize the sharing of munitions and British firmness would earn Soviet respect and frankness. As early as July, Macfarlane had taken this line, advising the C.I.G.S. when the Soviet Military Mission arrived in London to

> Treat them very firm and make them realise if possible without saying so directly that the help they will get from us depends largely on the extent to which they come across and on the degree to which we are taken into their confidence out here.[2]

On 1 August he had argued more specifically; 'If we make the supply of war material to Russia from us and America conditional on our being given fuller information we may succeed in getting results much earlier'.[3] The heads of the naval and air sections of the mission agreed, and together they advised Beaverbrook to adopt this approach in negotiations with the Kremlin.[4] Beaverbrook, however, to whom Macfarlane took an instant dislike,[5] refused. He knew the Nazi propaganda machine was poised to exploit the first sign of a rift in the conference - as it was, the German press crowed on the second day that the three Powers had fallen out[6] - and Beaverbrook would not risk inflaming Russian suspicions. He had come to Moscow, he said, not 'to bargain but to give'.

> The one way to break down the suspicious attitude which had given rise to Russian secrecy was to make clear beyond a doubt the British and American intention to satisfy Russian needs to the utmost in their power, whether the Russians gave anything or not.[7]

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1 WP(41)238, loc. cit.; Sir S. Cripps, no. 68, 5 Nov. 1941, PREM 3 401/7.
2 7 July 1941, appendix M, WO 178/25.
3 MIL 234, WO 178/25.
4 Interview with Admiral Sir Geoffrey Miles (head of the naval section of the mission, 1941-2, and head of mission, 1942-3), December 1972: Extracts from observations of General Mason-Macfarlane. . . , PREM 3 401/7.
5 E. Butler, Mason-Mac: The Life of Lieutenant-General Sir Noel Mason-Macfarlane (London, 1972), p. 137.
6 Sherwood, p. 391.
7 Taylor, p. 487.

Consequently, although the British[1] and American delegations[2] asked the Russians for details of Soviet raw materials and industrial production, they did not press for these when the Kremlin proved reluctant.[3] Satisfied that Soviet requests were reasonable[4] and the military crisis acute, they did not make the supply of munitions conditional on Soviet disclosures. Notwithstanding this, the Russians did divulge some information about their resources. Stalin told Beaverbrook that the Soviet forces were outnumbered 3 to 2 in aircraft, and 3 or 4 to 1 in tanks, while the Red Army had only 280 divisions to 320 German.[5] Tank production, he said, had fallen from 2,000 a month at the beginning of the war to 1,400 a month.[6] Aircraft production, on the other hand, Shakurin told Balfour in response to a specific enquiry, was 70 machines a day; 40 fighters, 20 bombers and 10 Stormovik bombers.[7] Obviously this information was not detailed enough to incorporate into the Victory Programme, but it is doubtful whether the Russians would have disclosed more if pressed. Time and again in the future they were to prove willing to sacrifice military advantages for the sake of maintaining their secrecy and immunity from Western influences. A policy of trading supplies for information would not have encouraged them to be open and a conference run on these lines would probably have ended in sterile reserve.

In the same way it is unlikely that Beaverbrook could have extracted political concessions from the Kremlin in return for the offer of supplies. Throughout the war the Kremlin showed little willingness to compromise on questions like the status of the Baltic states, and no matter how desperate its military situation, it defended its political interests doggedly. There is little reason to believe it would have acted differently in October 1941. The question, in any case, is irrelevant. At the Moscow conference it was the Russians suggested political discussions and the Allies who shied away from them. The Americans were

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1 BAR(A)1st mtg, 29 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7.
2 Supplement to memorandum by Harriman on meeting with Stalin, 28 Sept. 1941, BB papers, box 20/6 Russia; BAR(M)2nd mtg, 30 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7.
3 See BAR(M)2nd, 3rd mtgs, 30 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7; WP(41) 238, 8 Oct. 1941, CAB 66/19.
4 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941, 1 (Washington, 1958), p. 844. For Ismay's agreement, see WP(41)238; for Chaney's, The London Observer, p. 420.
5 Sherwood, p. 389.
6 WP(41)238, loc. cit.
7 BAR(A)2nd mtg, 30 Sept. 1941, CAB 99/7.

suspicious of British and Soviet collaboration over Poland and Iran,[1] and they wished to leave the question of Eastern Europe (where they scarcely dreamt the reeling Soviet forces would ever be dominant) in abeyance until after the war. Conscious of this and eager to avoid controversy, Beaverbrook too avoided political discussions. He refused to let Cripps come to conversations at the Kremlin, and made little response to Stalin's suggestion that the Anglo-Soviet agreement of July 1941 should be extended into an alliance.[2] He deflected discussions on the question of Finland[3] and would not negotiate with General Anders, the Polish leader in the Soviet Union. He listened sympathetically to Stalin's demand for British recognition of the Russian boundaries of 1941,[4] but apart from this adhered throughout the conference to 'his fixed purpose to confine the talks to supply matters'.[5]

Similarly he resisted efforts to initiate military discussions. Although Major-Generals Ismay and Macready had been included in the British delegation partly for this purpose,[6] Beaverbrook told them that he 'did not intend to allow discussions involving military negatives to cut across and impede the supply negotiations which were the purpose of the Mission'.[7] Strategic discussions at the conference were therefore limited to a ten-minute interview between Ismay and Stalin[8] and casual conversation between the latter and Beaverbrook.[9] Later the wisdom of this approach was called into question, since within weeks of the conference the Russians complained that their requests for aid, particularly for British troops in the Ukraine or at Archangel, had been ignored.[10] Churchill, too, had expected strategic discussions to take place and was surprised that they had not.[11]

But Beaverbrook's approach again seems sound. Whatever complaints the Russians made later, almost certainly strategic discussions at the conference would not have pleased them. The

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1 Langer and Gleason, p. 557, Dawson, p. 130.
2 Woodward, vol. II, p. 40.
3 Minute by Beaverbrook for PM, 10 Nov. 1941, PREM 3 401/7.
4 Taylor, p. 488.
5 Minute Beaverbrook for PM, loc. cit.
6 PM minute, M 1025/1, for Eden, 1 Nov. 1941, PREM 3 401/7. Macready was Assistant C.I.G.S. (in charge of supply).
7 BB minute to PM, 2 Nov. 1941, PREM 3 401/7.
8 WP(41)238, 8 Oct. 1941, CAB 66/19.
9 Summary of correspondence . . . , 19 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29471 N6654/3/38.
10 See p. 86.
11 PM minute, M 1025/1, loc. cit.

British would have rejected their proposed operations[1] and would have demanded disclosures which the Kremlin was unwilling to make. Dissension and recrimination could well have resulted. As it was, Stalin did not seem excessively keen to discuss military questions. Although he repeated his plea of 15 September twice to Beaverbrook on 28 September,[2] he did not persist in these enquiries. He did not mention Archangel or the Ukraine in his conversation with Ismay, and said simply that he understood why the British army could not form a second front now. Ismay left Moscow with the impression that 'anything in the nature of joint planning, whether in London or in Moscow, would in present circumstances be valueless'.[3]

Whatever the later criticisms by Cripps[4] or the military mission, therefore, Beaverbrook's tactics at this conference stand vindicated. He gained a speedy and amicable agreement which formed the basis for the long-term supply basis. Although many contentious questions were ignored, in this Beaverbrook was simply following the pattern already set in British policy in the past three months. This had been based on several assumptions: that the Soviet Union's and Great Britain's need of each other was self-evident; that Britain must, for political as well as military reasons, promise aid in defiance of strict military logic; and that the gamble of trusting the Russians now would pay dividends in the future. All these assumptions Beaverbrook accepted, and it was to his credit that the conference reached a triumphant end. Many have testified to his unique achievement. He 'got on amazingly well with Stalin, making an impression that no Englishman had done hitherto. They "were both racketeers" - and could understand each other', recalled Sir Archibald Rowlands,[5] 'Beaverbrook has been a great salesman', Harriman stated. 'His

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1 For example, see Macfarlane's attitude in MIL 1036 to Chiefs of Staff, 1 Oct. 1941, ADM 199/606.

2 Summary of correspondence.., loc. cit.

3 WP(41)238, loc. cit.

4 Sir S. Cripps, no. 68, 5 Nov. 1941, PREM 3 401/7. According to the journalist, C. L. Sulzberger, Cripps said later in November that Beaverbrook's trip was 'a fiasco'.

> 'Georgians and Armenians like Stalin and Mikoyan are realists and appreciate expert bargaining. If you give them anything for nothing they think you are foolish and weak'. (Sulzberger, A Long Row of Candles Memoirs and Diaries 1934-54 London, 1969, p. 183).

5 Conversation with Liddell Hart, 18 March 1942, LH papers 11/1942/14.

personal sincerity was convincing. His genius never worked more effectively'.[1] The Sunday Times journalist in Moscow, Alexander Werth, agreed.

> . . . Beaverbrook's dynamics have unquestionably contributed to the success of the Conference; and his nightly talks with Stalin seem to have been decisive in smoothing away the rough edges . . . At the little press conference yesterday he (Beaverbrook) was bursting with exuberance. Slapping his knees he was saying that the Russians were pleased with Beaverbrook, and the Americans were pleased with Beaverbrook - 'Now aren't they, Averell?' to which Harriman replied: 'Sure, you bet'.

The Russians certainly did seem pleased. Their papers made much of the united front between the three great industrial powers,[3] and Molotov made an unusually warm speech at the closing session of the conference. He stressed the

> great political importance of the conference, which had foiled the Hitlerites' intention to destroy their enemies one by one, demonstrating to the world that a mighty front of freedom-loving peoples had been created . . .[4]

Cripps too reported that 'the unexpected rapidity with which results have been achieved has made a great impression on the Soviet Government, who seem genuinely delighted at what has happened'.[5]

In London the reaction was even more enthusiastic. Churchill telegraphed Beaverbrook on 3 October: 'Heartiest congratulations to you and all. The unity and success proclaimed is of immense value . . . Impossible to restrain the feeling of optimism here'.[6] It was indeed a remarkable occasion. Two nations, one of whom was not yet belligerent and both of whom had long viewed the third with distaste and suspicion, had promised to supply the following list of munitions and supplies:

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1 Harriman's memorandum of conversation with Stalin, 30 Sept, 1941, BB papers, box 20/6 Russia. For Ismay's congratulations to Beaverbrook, see Taylor, p. 487.
2 Werth, p. 276.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 275.
5 Sir S. Cripps, no. 128, 3 Oct. 1941, FO 418/87.
6 Churchill, III, p. 418.

Equipment	Quantity requested per month	Quantity offered
Aircraft		
Light bombers	300	100 per month from U.S.
Fighters	100	100 " " " "
		200 " " " U.K.
Tanks	1,100	500 per month from U.S. and U.K., plus 200 tankettes with machine guns from U.K.
Anti-aircraft guns	300	500 two-pdrs from U.K. over nine months 756 37mm from U.S. over nine months
Anti-tank rifles	2,000	200 a month 250 a month from January to March 1942 300 a month from March on
Scouting cars	2,000	5,000 from U.S. over nine months (later corrected to 5,600)*
Lorries (3,2, and 1½ ton)	10,000	To be investigated in U.S.
Aluminium	4,000 tons (excluding 5,000 shipped from U.K. in September	2,000 tons a month from Canada To be investigated in U.S.
Tin	1,500 tons	1,500 tons a month from U.K.
Lead	7,000 "	To be met from U.K.
Nickel	800 "	To be investigated in U.S. and U.K.
Molybdenum	300 "	300 tons a month from U.S.
Cobalt	10 "	To be met by U.K.
Copper (Electrolytic)	3,000 "	" " " by U.K.
Rolled brass	5,000 "	" " " in part from U.S.
Magnesium alloys	300 "	To be investigated in U.K. and U.S.
Zinc (electrolytic)	1,500 "	To be met by U.K. (Hoped that half would be provided from U.S. but U.S. government not committed)
Petroleum	20,000 "	To be investigated by U.S. and U.K.
Armour plate for tanks	10,000 "	To be met by U.S.
Sole leather	1,300 " (later corrected to 1,500 tons)*	3,000 tons already released by U.S. More to be given later.
Rubber	6,000 tons	To be met by U.K.

Equipment	Quantity requested per month	Quantity offered
Jute	4,000 tons	To be met by U.K.
Shellac	300 "	" " " " "
Wool	2,000 "	" " " " "
Army boots	400,000 pairs	(U.S. and U.K. working
Army cloth	1,200,000 metres	(out precise figures
Wheat	200,000 tons	To be met by Canada
Cocoa beans	1,500 "	To be met by U.K.
Various industrial equipment	$3,000,000	U.S. and U.K. to meet as much as possible
Metal-cutting machine tools	1,200 pieces	" " " " "

* ASE(41)22, 1 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29581 N6523/3084/38.

In addition to this, there were many other demands for raw materials, industrial and medical supplies which were to be investigated on the delegations' return to London and Washington. There were also considerable naval requirements, including guns, 8 destroyers, 9 anti-magnetic mine-sweeping trawlers and 150 Asdic sets, which had yet to be considered. A further list contained returned cargoes from the Soviet Union to Britain.[1]

In surveying this list of supplies, Churchill might have felt irrepressible optimism. There can be little doubt, however, that the Service departments felt dismay, a dismay that was to grow as the assumptions on which this commitment had been made began, in the next nine months, to change.

1 WP(41)238, 8 Oct. 1941, CAB 66/19.

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Though the signing of the Moscow protocol was the triumphant conclusion to three and a half months of British and American diplomacy, essentially it was only a beginning. A promise of definite and regular assistance had replaced the ad hoc gestures of the past, but there remained the far greater task of putting this promise into effect. The problems this entailed were numerous and formidable. On the practical level production programmes had to be accelerated, allocations of munitions adjusted, strategic plans adapted and shipping schedules reorganized. On the political level the claims of Allies and neutrals, whose loyalty might be suspect, had to be respected, while Russian claims for more and better munitions had also to be accommodated. The first two months of the protocol were therefore a constant struggle to resolve conflicting claims. In practical terms this meant recurring disputes between Beaverbrook, who championed Russian interests, and the Service departments, who, naturally enough, defended their own. From these disputes, in which Beaverbrook consistently emerged the victor, a pattern was soon established of giving Russian claims to scarce munitions priority. Consequently, although the impact of the protocol was not immediately felt in British theatres of operations, since many of these were remote from their source of supply, the strain by early 1942 was acute. In fact Russian claims were given priority so consistently in the two months before the attack on Pearl Harbor that, even when the Japanese shattered the entire assumptions on which the British and Americans had planned in October 1941, the protocol was fulfilled in its original form.

It was natural for the protocol to be given the highest priority immediately after the Moscow conference since the problem of allocating and shipping the supplies was extremely complex. Moreover, the various tasks involved in moving the munitions from factory to port had to be co-ordinated with the greatest speed. Beaverbrook had cabled even before he left Moscow stressing the need for the munitions promised for October to be on their way to the Soviet Union by the end of that same month.

> The effect of this agreement has been an immense strengthening of the morale of Moscow. The maintenance of this morale will depend on delivery. If there is a heavy failure in October then the situation will in our opinion deteriorate . . . I do not regard the military situation

> here as safe for the winter months. I do think that morale might make it safe.[1]

Churchill completely agreed, and he promised Stalin on 6 October that all major munitions for that month, save nineteen tanks, would have left the United Kingdom by 22 October.[2] Given that munitions and raw materials promised before the Moscow conference were still awaiting shipment,[3] and that the details of the protocol did not reach the responsible departments until some days after the decisions in Moscow,[4] this was no mean undertaking. To deal with it, the Prime Minister established in mid-October the Allied Supplies Executive (A.S.E.), an interdepartmental committee which replaced the Committee for Co-ordination of Allied Supplies. Beaverbrook, as Minister of Supply, was the new committee's chairman. The Foreign Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Air and War and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Ministry of War Transport were invited to join. Members of the Admiralty could attend when necessary[5] and the committee as a whole had authority to co-ordinate all departments at policy level. It was in constant contact with representatives of the Soviet government, and was responsible for determining, where matters of strategic priority were not concerned, whether new Russian requests should be approved. It had ultimate authority over the shipment of supplies to the Soviet Union, since supplies were presented by the various departments to the Director of Movements at the War Office, whose loading programmes the A.S.E. approved three months in advance. It then passed them on to the Ministry of War Transport, which, through the Anglo-Soviet Shipping Committee, allocated the necessary shipping. Non-military supplies were in practice not the responsibility of the A.S.E., but the government agency controlling these, the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, worked closely with the secretariat of the A.S.E. at all times. In this system in fact the British had a procedure which, unlike the Americans', had all the ingredients for success - co-ordination of policy by one body, presentation of cargo through one channel and loading by one agency.[6]

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1 Telegram to PM, no. 39 LINEN, 3 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580.
2 Churchill, The Second World War, vol. III, pp. 418-19.
3 Ibid.
4 CAS(41)35th mtg, confidential annex (Committee for Co-ordination of Allied Supplies), 8 Oct. 1941, FO 371 29578 N5912/3084/38.
5 WP(42)417, appendix 1, 17 Sept. 1942, CAB 66/28.
6 Paper by W. O. Hart, Mar. 1942, Beaverbrook Papers, box 19/2.

The importance of this cannot be overestimated, for the task confronting the British in October proved considerably more taxing than originally anticipated. This was because, as the C.I.G.S. learned with alarm early in October, they had undertaken to meet in the first two months of the protocol not only their own commitments, which strained their resources severely, but part of the American also. The British agreed in fact to provide an extra 84 tanks in October and an extra 43 in November, bringing their total for these months to 334 and 293 respectively.[1] At the same time they agreed to release 300 light bombers (A-20s), then being produced on British contracts in the United States, to help the Americans meet their aircraft commitment in the first months of the protocol.

Later, when American production had expanded to meet its commitments, these planes, like the tanks, would be replaced, but the date of this was as yet unspecified.[2] In the meantime there was the immediate problem of finding extra munitions in October and November, and this was particularly difficult, since both American and British production was slow to expand as anticipated. Churchill had asked Hopkins on 25 September to ensure that the production targets for the first half of 1943 were met in the second half of 1942,[3] but obviously, given the Americans' need for British help in October and November, the benefits of this would be felt only in the future. Similarly, despite measures to stimulate British industry, production there had not had time to respond and expand. Beaverbrook's 'Tank for Russia' week from 22 to 27 September had admittedly produced an impressive increase in production - twice the rate of May 1941 -[4] but there was no guarantee that such appeals would always be effective.[5] In fact, though Beaverbrook made another appeal on his return from Moscow for increased production in Britain and Canada, where tanks for the Russians were also being produced, he was forced to admit to the

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1 Minute by C.I.G.S. to PM (but in fact not sent), 4 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580; tel. to U.K. High Commissioners, 17 Oct. 1941, PREM 3 401/20.

2 Note by Balfour for Beaverbrook, 11 Nov. 1941. BB papers, file 3, box 17.

3 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 334.

4 Minute for PM, 30 Sept. 1941, BB papers, BBK D/127.

5 Home Intelligence Weekly Report (HIWR) no. 51, 24 Sept, 1941, INFO 1/292B. There was some indication of public concern that this kind of appeal would be used excessively and that the public had reached saturation point with appeals.

House of Lords on 23 October that 'we must have an increase in output which so far we have not got'.[1]

In these circumstances it was extremely difficult for the Service departments to find the munitions in the quantities demanded by the protocol in these months, and it needed a co-ordinating force like the A.S.E. to prevent their falling into arrears. This was particularly so since military calculations were constantly disrupted by strategic changes or by the Russians expressing preference for the type of tanks and aircraft already allocated elsewhere. The War Office, for instance, in early October agreed to allocated all infantry tank production for the first two months of the protocol to the Russians. ('Crusader' cruiser tanks were reserved for the Middle East where the desert conditions made speed and mobility all-important, and the other cruiser tanks, the 'Covenanter' and 'Churchill', were not yet ready for service outside the United Kingdom.) The result of this decision was that the Middle East, which had also been anticipating some of the 373 American tanks now diverted to the protocol, had its allocation of tanks cut from 460 tanks to 312.[2] At the same time the re-equipment of the Home Forces was postponed and allocations to India, New Zealand and Australia were cancelled. At first the consequences of this did not seem unduly serious. The threat of invasion, for which the Home Forces had to be prepared, had receded during the winter, and the Middle East could still reach its target of 3½ armoured divisions by 1 April 1942. Obviously it was not desirable to reduce, as the British were obliged to, the reserves in the Middle East from 50 per cent to 33 1/3 per cent and to postpone the development of Australia's and India's armoured forces for service overseas.[3] But as the C.I.G.S. explained to the Commander-in-Chief, India, who pointed out the political repercussions of doing this:

> It is not possible to reduce (the) allocation to Russia: if (the) result of this allocation is to keep Russia fighting it will have far reaching effects on war as a whole and will thereby directly effect security of India.[4]

Within a few days of his saying this, however, the strategic situation deteriorated, bringing the logic of his argument into question. On 12 and 13 October many government offices and the

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1 Quoted in FO 371 29579 N6156/3084/38.
2 Minute CIGS to PM, 4 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580.
3 Minutes of meeting in WO, 8 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580.
4 CIGS to Wavell, tel. 96839, in response to tel. from Wavell, 14 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580.

entire diplomatic corps were evacuated from Moscow as the German advance continued apparently irresistibly. By the 17th Field Marshal von Rundstedt's armies had overrun the whole of the Donbas basin in the Ukraine, and had entered Taganrog on the Sea of Azov. On the 24th, General Paulus's 6th Army took Kharkov and the way was open to Rostov and beyond it, the Caucasus. The British were faced by the end of October with the probability that German forces would be in Transcaucasia by the end of February 1942, threatening Anglo-Iranian oil vital to their war effort. The diversion of tanks from the Middle East and India, whose troops were defending Iran, therefore seemed increasingly irresponsible. If it continued, the Middle East Command could face a threat in the spring on its northern flank and in the desert with two armoured divisions and one army tank brigade less than the minimum force required.[1] The protocol therefore was under challenge, since whatever the Soviet Union's need - and of that there was little doubt - the Middle East was recognized to have first priority;[2] and, as the War Office concluded on 31 October, '<u>The only means of increasing the supply of tanks to our own forces would be by cutting down the allocation to Russia</u>'. Fortunately, however, the War Office was not forced to do this. It realized that such action 'may be impracticable at present' and instead took a further 170 tanks from the Home Forces for the Middle East, justifying this on the grounds that earlier estimates of the defence needed for the United Kingdom had been made before the <u>Luftwaffe</u> had been 'mauled' in the East. More significantly, the War Office recommended that the Americans send to the Middle East in the next three months 350 cruiser (M.3) tanks which would otherwise have been allocated to the British from U.S. production in the first quarter of 1942.[3] This General Marshall agreed to do on 6 November, and the Middle East thus received virtually all the remaining medium tank production which had been earmarked for the U.S. Armoured Forces itself in that time.[4]

As a result of this the War Office was able to meet its protocol commitments in November and December despite the strategic changes of October. It was saved from having to choose between the Soviet Union and the Middle East and, as far as actual numbers of tanks

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1 WO review of availability and requirements or armoured formations, 31 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580, 51A. (Emphasis in the original)
2 CIGS/PM/BM/171, 15 Sept. 1941, PREM 3 401/20.
3 WO review . . .; Minute by CIGS, 17 Nov. 1941, DO(41)27, CAB 69/3.
4 Leighton and Coakley, <u>Global Logistics</u>, p. 104.

was concerned, was able to meet its obligations to both. There were, however, other conflicting claims and these too could have disrupted the protocol, had not the A.S.E. asserted its authority. Spare parts, for instance, were in desperately short supply, the War Office claimed, and there was some reluctance on its part to ship them uncritically to the Russians. Beaverbrook, however, insisting that 'The spares situation has never been so good as it is at the present time' took the issue to the Defence Committee; that, he claimed, seemed to be 'the only method of getting from the C.I.G.S. the right quantity of supplies'.[1] The committee gave him a ruling on 20 October that every tank shipped to the Soviet Union should be matched with three months' spare parts, whatever sacrifice this might entail.[2]

Beaverbrook also used all his influence to ensure that the maximum number of 'Valentines' tanks were sent to the Soviet Union each month. The War Office wanted to limit the number of these to one hundred a month, since it believed that only by doing this could it make good in the foreseeable future the losses suffered by the Home Forces and India. (The Matilda tank, which made up the rest of the Russian allocation was not suitable for the needs of either of these theatres.)[3] Beaverbrook, however, regretted sending the Russians large numbers of the Matilda. Under pressure from the War Office - 'the importunities and blandishments of Lieut-General Macready', he later called it - he agreed to leave the December allocation for the Russians as it stood, at only 100 Valentines;[4] but he soon struck back. On 3 December he received a request from Stalin for as many Valentines a month as possible, since they performed better in winter conditions and had a longer lease of life than the Matilda.[5] Beaverbrook therefore, without consulting the War Office,[6] promised the Soviet embassy late in December that the proportion of Valentines in the January allocation would be increased to 150.[7]

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1 Beaverbrook to Macready, 20 Oct. 1941, BB papers, box 19/3.
2 DO(41)67th mtg, min. 2, CAB 69/2.
3 DO(41)27, 17 Nov. 1941, CAB 69/3; DO(41)70th mtg, min. 1, 17 Nov.1941, CAB 69/2; minute Dill to PM, 21 Dec. 1941, PREM 3 401/20.
4 Beaverbrook minute to PM, 22 Dec. 1941, PREM 3 401/20; ASE(41)5th mtg, min. 6. 9 Dec. 1941, CAB 92/1; BB to Stalin, 9 Dec. 1941, BB papers, box 20/1.
5 ASE(41)27, CAB 92/1.
6 Lieut-General Ronald M. Weeks to Macready, TAUT no. 391, 5 Jan. 1942, BB papers, file 1, box 22. (Weeks was Director-General of Army Equipment, War Office.)
7 ASE(42)8, annex, CAB 92/3. Progress reports of the shipment of military supplies early in 1942 confirm this (ASE(42)40, 74, CAB 92/3).

This was indicative of what was happening to the protocol. Increasingly as the practical problems of meeting its deadlines grew, the reservations of the Service departments were cast aside and the Russian claims were given priority. Failures of production, changes in the strategic situation and growing Russian discrimination forced the British to give the protocol precedence over almost every theatre. This was even more true of the Air Ministry than of the War Office. There the problems of meeting the protocol deadlines were more intense because the Americans did not ease the situation but instead exacerbated it. At the end of October they reneged on the agreement of the London conference which Harriman had warned at the time was tentative[1] but on the basis of which the Air Ministry had agreed to supply the Russians. Now the Americans decided to abandon the percentage plan - 50 per cent of Lend-Lease and 7½ per cent of U.S.A.A.F. contracts for the British - and replaced it with arbitrary allocations, in some cases better for the British but in most cases worse. For instance, the British were allocated 100 per cent of Defence Aid production of Airacobras (P-39) and Mustangs (P-51), but they lost 343 Kittyhawks (P-40) and large numbers of bombers. In light bombers their allocation was reduced to only 19, the other 515 on Lend-Lease contracts being diverted to the Russians.[2] This was over and above the 300 Bostons (A-20) 'lent' from British contracts and these were now not to be replaced until at least June 1942.[3] As Sinclair said, 'The American contribution of bombers to Russia appears almost negligible and the main burden falls on us'.[4] In heavy bombers too the British lost seriously - this time for the sake of the Philippines.[5] Instead of 400 bombers, allocated under the Arnold-Slessor agreement, they were now - in November - assigned only 238.[6]

These reductions threw the Air Ministry's calculations into chaos. Although the loss of the Kittyhawks was tolerable since a continuation order had recently been submitted for Hurricanes,

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1 Note on Allocation of U.S. Production, 8 Nov. 1941, BB papers, Air Ministry D/173.
2 SOS to Balfour, WEBBER W.396, 31 Oct. 1941, AVIA 15/1451.
3 British Air Commission, Washington to Ministry of Aircraft Production, BRINY 10339, 29 Oct. 1941, AVIA 15/1451.
4 WEBBER W.396, loc. cit.
5 W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate, The Army Air Forces in World War II vol. 6 (Chicago, 1955), p. 403.
6 Note on Allocation of U.S. Production, loc. cit.

the bombers were needed urgently in the Middle East and at home.[1] The metropolitan air force was severely depleted because of its campaign of daylight bombing of short-range targets, which it had been waging since June with the strategical aim of assisting the Russians by forcing the enemy to bring back fighter squadrons from the East.[2] In the two and a half months since the German attack on the Soviet Union, Fighter and Bomber Commands had lost 302 aircraft compared with only 42 in the five months before this.[3] Supplies of American aircraft were essential to balance out these losses, but these were now completely unreliable. From the abrogation of the September agreement it was clear that American production at its present levels could not fulfil the role of the 'arsenal of democracy'. Yet there was no provision for an expansion of aircraft production in the second Lend-Lease Appropriation bill debated early in November, since the Americans were concerned more with development of their ordnance programme.[4] Furthermore there was no separate allocation for the Russians as the British wished,[5] though the Soviet Union was declared eligible for Lend-Lease aid on 7 November. Consequently it was likely that British interests would continue to be sacrificed in America's effort to meet her protocol commitments, particularly as there was some hardening of attitude in Washington. Balfour, who was in the United States at this time to clarify the aircraft supply position, reported of one meeting with the Americans:

> Chaney gave vigorous support to Russian claims and on the whole favoured concessions to the British. Arnold clearly did not like the Russian commitment and expressed determination not to make any concessions which would involve removal of aircraft from U.S. squadrons without specific instructions from above. He reminded us that all aircraft off L.L. (Lend-Lease) contracts were at the disposal of U.S. Government to allocate at their (sic) discretion. . . and declined to make any definite commitments for the future. . .[6]

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1 Minute for Deputy Air Member for Supply and Organization (D/AMSO), 31 Oct. 1941, AIR 19/288; WEBBER W. 396, loc. cit.

2 Note on Operations Undertaken by Fighter Command to Assist the Russians, 20 Oct. 1941, AIR 19/288; for a description of these operations, code named 'Circus', see Sir Charles Webster and N. Frankland, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, 1939-1945, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1961), pp. 234-6.

3 Note on Operations . . ., loc. cit.

4 Note by AM on American Supply . . ., 27 Nov. 1941, BB papers, BBK D/173.

5 Halifax to FO, no. 96 USLON, 8 Nov. 1941, AVIA 15/1451.

6 U/SOS to AM, Caesar 666, 29 Oct. 1941, AVIA 15/1451.

In these circumstances the obvious way the British could salvage the situation was by limiting the fighter aircraft they sent to the Russians after October to those which the Americans still supplied liberally, namely the Airacobra and the Mustang. If they did this instead of sending Hurricanes, they could at least shield the Middle East air force during its transition from Tomahawks to the untried Kittyhawk.[1] They could also relieve the strain on Hurricane spare parts which were in very scarce supply and which simply did 'not exist' in the quantities the Russians requested.[2] Furthermore the British could ensure reliable supplies for Fighter Command which was likely to face heavy attacks on the United Kingdom in the spring of 1942,[3] and could in effect transfer the burden of the protocol to those aircraft least vital to Air Ministry planning. At the same time by supplying Airacobras the Air Ministry could meet Russian needs more effectively than if it supplied Hurricanes. Problems of maintenance and spare parts would be eased since the Airacobra and the Mustang had the same Allison engine as the Tomahawk and Kittyhawk. Shipping would be simplified since all fighters would be issued from the one source, and most important, the Russians would receive aircraft with the type of armament they preferred. The Airacobra carried one cannon in addition to its four machine guns:[4] the Hurricanes which the Chief of Air Staff had released for shipment to the Soviet Union in October did not.[5]

The plan to send the Russians Airacobras and Mustangs therefore had much to recommend it. Unfortunately, though, it was some time before the Air Ministry could implement it, even in part. At first Beaverbrook resolutely opposed it and insisted, when the question was raised in mid-October, that Britain was bound for political and technical reasons to send Hurricanes. These had been mooted at the Moscow conference as the fighter the Russians were most likely to receive and, though there was no definite agreement confirming this,[6] Beaverbrook believed that 'the most damaging thing

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1 DWO minute for CAS, 18 Oct. 1941, AIR 8/1000; DWO minute for SOS through Vice CAS, 30 Oct. 1941, BB papers, Air Ministry D/173.
2 Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 19 Oct. 1941, BB papers, loc. cit.
3 DO(41) 67th mtg, min. 2, 20 Oct. 1941, CAB 69/8.
4 Mtg of Air Council, 14 Oct. 1941, AIR 8/1000; DO(41) 67th mtg, min. 2, loc. cit.
5 Portal minute for SOS, 20 Oct. 1941, AIR 8/1000. Instead of an anticipated 60 cannon Hurricanes, only 27 were produced in September 1941 (Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 19 Oct. 1941, BB papers, loc. cit.).
6 Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 19 Oct. 1941, BB papers, loc. cit.

we can do now is to give the Russians the impression that we are going to water down our promises.'[1] Stalin expected to receive Hurricanes and Kittyhawks (from the United States)[2] and the Airacobra, Beaverbrook declared, was an inferior aircraft to these.[3] (It was in fact approaching obsolescence and was noted for its poor performance at high altitudes, its slow rate of climb and its lack of manoeuvrability;[4] but the Russians were later to prize it for its effectiveness in a ground-attack role.) Beaverbrook's reservations were shared by Eden and Churchill, the latter of whom thought 'It would be better to put up with certain disadvantages in order to preserve the integrity of our offer' and avoid giving the Russians 'cause to imagine that we were trying to modify the Agreement, at any rate for the next month or two.'[5] Nevertheless in time Beaverbrook did agree to the Air Ministry's proposals. Conscious of the value of standardizing types, he agreed late in October to increase the proportion of Airacobras in November and December. Mustangs, however, he vetoed, on the grounds that this would introduce too many types. The Russians, who approved the Airacobra allocations early in November, agreed and would accept Mustangs only for trial purposes.[6]

The reprieve the Air Ministry gained from this agreement was shortlived. It depended on regular supplies of aircraft from the United States, and once again these proved unreliable. Airacobras arriving early in December were found to have mechanical faults and needed testing before they could be forwarded to the Soviet Union. The A.S.E. therefore decided that the December allocation of aircraft should be made up only of Airacobras which had first passed through British hands. If the full quota of 120 Airacobras could not be supplied in this way then the balance would have to be made up with Hurricanes. (The December allocation of these already stood at eighty.[7]) Beaverbrook for one was not prepared to send any plane that was not completely reliable, for he was still smarting from the embarrassment of the Tomahawk's failure in

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1 Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 20 Oct. 1941, BB papers, loc. cit.
2 Minute by Balfour for SOS, 15 Oct. 1941, AIR 19/288.
3 DO(41) 67th mtg, min. 2, 20 Oct. 1941, CAB 69/2.
4 Craven and Cate, p. 212.
5 DO(41) 67th mtg, min. 2, loc. cit.
6 SOS to Balfour (in Washington), WEBBER W.324, 24 Oct. 1941, AVIA 15/1451; Beaverbrook to G. Pugachev (Soviet Military Mission) 4 Nov. 1941, BB papers, box 20/1; M. Stalin to Beaverbrook, 27 Nov. 1941, ASE(41)28, CAB 92/1.
7 ASE(41)5th mtg, min. 6, 9 Dec. 1941, CAB 92/1.

the Soviet Union. Many of these planes had been hastily despatched in the preceding months without their generators being modified or without sufficient spare parts. They had then proved so unreliable that the Russians had quickly grounded them all.[1] The military mission reported from Moscow on 18 November that the 'Russians are in a thoroughly bad temper about the Tomahawk and one can hardly blame them. It is a great pity that this was the first aircraft we sent them as it has caused them to suspect our goodwill and our ability to send proper spares for Hurricanes and other types.'[2] Given that aircraft were known to be the most urgent of Russian needs,[3] such a failure could not be tolerated again particularly as Soviet aircraft production at this time was estimated by the Joint Intelligence Committee to be only 20 per cent of the June 1941 figure.[4] Stalin himself had also contacted Beaverbrook on 27 November to inform him that

> The 'Hurricanes' are greatly appreciated. Less favourable however, are the reports on the 'Tomahawks'. We were able, however, to make even this type of aircraft suitable for the needs of the front, after certain adaptions had been effected. We would like as many 'Hurricanes' and tanks as possible.[5]

Beaverbrook therefore told Sinclair on 4 December:

> I do not think you should send 137 Airacobras to the Russians at all. . . .
>
> We got into a terrible mess with the Tomahawks. And we should not repeat the error. It would discourage the Russians at a time when it seems to me to be of immense importance to give them all the encouragement in our power.[6]

The Air Ministry agreed,[7] although it suspected that part of the trouble with the Tomahawk had been the Russian pilots' mishandling of the plane.[8] It undertook to make up any deficit in the December allocation with Hurricanes, even though on the previous month's calculations Britain's own requirements of this plane in the months to June 1942 exceeded stocks and anticipated production by 857.[9]

Once again, therefore, the demands of the Russians were given overriding priority. The Air Ministry, like the War Office, learnt

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1 Britlistaff to Air Ministry, 4 Oct. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
2 30 Military Mission to Air Ministry, AIR 1629, 18 Nov. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
3 ASE(41)2, 29 Oct. 1941, CAB 92/1.
4 Note for Director of Plans, 21 Nov. 1941, WO 193/580.
5 ASE(41)28, CAB 92/1.
6 BB to Sinclair, 4 Dec. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
7 AM to RAFDEL, W'ton, WEBBER W.812, 11 Dec. 1941, AIR 19/288.
8 ASE to Kuibyshev, MOSSY no. 109, 29 Nov. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
9 Availability of Hurricanes; November 1941 to June 1942, AIR 8/1000.

how difficult it was to limit the impact of the protocol. It could not judiciously select for the Russians the type of munitions it least valued itself, but was forced to make ever greater sacrifices. This was partly because, with the shortage of time and the failures of production, there was no other way to meet the protocol deadlines; but it was also the result of the tremendous political will in London to honour Russian commitment whatever the cost.

This political will was so strong at this time because throughout October and November 1941 relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union were particularly sensitive.[1] Despite the Moscow conference, the Russians remained far from satisfied with the British contribution to the war, and continued to press for actual military assistance. The offers of help the British made in response - to take over the duties of the five or six Soviet divisions in northern Iran,[2] or to send a token force to the Caucasus[3] - made the Russians resentful and suspicious. On 23 October Molotov accused the British - with some justice[4] - of failing to give a direct answer to Stalin's earlier requests for twenty-five to thirty British divisions. Maisky on the other hand stressed throughout the month the political importance of British troops fighting 'side by side with Russians on their soil',[5] and not merely in the Caucasus, an area of past conflict between Britain and the Soviet Union.[6] Cripps warned on 26 October that the Russians were becoming obsessed with the idea that the British would fight 'to the last drop of Russian blood',[6] and Macfarlane too confirmed that the Kremlin would accept troops 'only if they are employed at front against enemy.'[7] The front at this time was not the Caucasus, but Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov and Taganrog.

The British strove to regain Russian confidence, but were unsuccessful for some time. Churchill offered on 4 November to send

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1 For a full account see Woodward, British Foreign Policy, vol. II, pp. 40-54; and Churchill, III, ch. XXVIII.
2 Made by Churchill on 12 October 1941. See Gwyer, Grand Strategy, pp. 208-9.
3 Made by Eden to Maisky on 16 October (Woodward, II, p. 41).
4 A Foreign Office survey of correspondence between the two governments admitted this on 19 November. FO 371 29471 N6654/3/38.
5 Ibid.
6 Woodward, p. 43.
7 Macfarlane to COS, MIL 1308, 25 Oct. 1941, WO 193/645A.

two British generals, Wavell and Paget,[1] to Moscow for military discussions,[2] but Stalin rejected the offer brusquely. The reason, it seems, was the Kremlin's annoyance at the Cabinet's reluctance to declare war on Finland, Romania and Hungary, and the premature publicity this issue received in the West. Stalin declared in his reply to Churchill on 11 November that this had made the situation between their countries intolerable. There was no 'clarity' in Anglo-Soviet relations; 'no definite understanding between our two countries on war aims and on plans for the post-war organisation of peace'; 'no agreement . . . on mutual military assistance'. Unless Wavell and Paget were empowered to discuss these questions, Stalin declared, 'it would be . . . very difficult for me to find the time for the conversations.' He also added that protocol supplies had reached the Red Army broken, inadequately packed, and with their spare parts scattered on different ships.[3] The public announcement he made on 6 November, the anniversary of the Revolution, was equally hostile, declaring that the absence of a second front eased the German position 'and such a front must unquestionably appear in the near future'.[4]

Churchill was offended, since his true feelings, as he explained to Cripps on 28 October, were that the Russians

> certainly have no right to reproach us. They brought their own fate upon themselves when, by their Pact with Ribbentrop, they let Hitler loose on Poland and so started the war. They cut themselves off from an effective second front when they let the French army be destroyed.[5]

Nonetheless relations did not deteriorate further. The Russians made it clear through formal communications and 'off-the-record' confessions by Maisky that they had not meant to cause offence. On 21 November therefore, Churchill offered to send the Foreign Secretary to Moscow for discussion of war aims and post-war settlements. Further he offered military experts to discuss the sending

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1 Wavell was C-in-C, India, Iran and Iraq, and would have been concerned with any force sent to the Caucasus. Paget, designate C-in-C, Far East, had been Chief of Staff, Home Forces, and could therefore explain the reasons why Britain could not attack the Continent. Wavell also spoke Russian.

2 Churchill, pp. 468-9.

3 Churchill, pp. 469-70.

4 Woodward, p. 49. As Woodward points out, the word 'must' was used in the Tass Agency translation, but the embassy at Kuibyshev (evacuated from Moscow on 16 October) used the word 'ought'.

5 Churchill, p. 420.

of British troops 'not only into the Caucasus but into the fighting line of your armies in the south'.[1] (This was in fact a larger commitment than the Chiefs of Staff had originally intended but they agreed to it on the understanding that there was no other way to secure Russian co-operation in the defence of Caucasian and Iranian oil.)[2] Stalin accepted both offers cordially on 23 November.[3]

Unfortunately, though, this accord was almost immediately threatened. Early in December the Chiefs of Staff withdrew their support for intervention in southern Russia since the assumptions on which they had agreed to it had changed. Auchinleck's offensive, finally launched on 18 November, had proved a larger commitment than expected, and already a brigade of one of the divisions allocated to the southern Russian force had been drawn into it.[4] At the same time the Russians were no longer retreating to the Caucasus but had in fact on 29 November recaptured the city of Rostov lost to the Wehrmacht ten days earlier. To the annoyance of Churchill and Eden, therefore, the Chiefs of Staff advised the Defence Committee on 3 December that they could no longer support the offer of troops and air forces for the Soviet Union. Further to that, they were far from enthusiastic about providing an extra 500 tanks and 500 aircraft as Beaverbrook urged them to do as a compensating gesture to the Russians. Tank casualties in the Middle East had been high[5] and aircraft holdings in the United Kingdom were now so tight that there were only one hundred more Hurricanes and Spitfires than at the same time in 1940.[6] The Chiefs' of Staff attitude made the prospects for Eden's coming conference in Moscow look bleak, for it meant he must go empty-handed. In fact, on the following day the new C.I.G.S., General Alan Brooke, and Portal conceded that they could send fifty Churchill tanks a month after January 1942 and possibly a further 300 aircraft from the United States;[7] but the Prime Minister had reservations about this. He thought it

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1 Churchill, p. 471.
2 COS(41)383rd mtg, min. 9, AIR 8/930. See also the diary entry for 5 Nov. 1941 by Pownall: 'Both Dill and myself are anxious to get a move on towards the Caucasus . . . I'm not interested at all in helping the Russians there, but I do want to lay hands on Baku so that we can make quite sure that place doesn't fall intact into German hands.' (Pownall papers.) For a full description of discussions about intervention in southern Russia see Gwyer, pp. 206-16.
3 Churchill, pp. 472-3.
4 Gwyer, p. 321.
5 DO(41)71st mtg, min. 2, 3 Dec. 1941, CAB 69/2.
6 COS(41)408th mtg, min. 4, 4 Dec. 1941, WO 193/669.
7 Ibid.

would be 'unsound' to send the Russians an untried type (like the Churchill). Eventually the compromise settled upon was to offer the Russians ten R.A.F. squadrons when the issue had been decided in Libya.[1] Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, records the Cabinet meeting at which this was discussed:

> Appears that we shall not even have material to offer Russians - in place of Divisions. A. (Eden) - rightly made a stink about this, but agreed to go. P.M. again stamped on A. Sinclair for suggesting postponement.[2]

In the event, even this offer of squadrons was withdrawn; for, as Eden was en route to Moscow, news broke of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the extension of the war to the Pacific.[3]

Given that the British were forced to disappoint Russian expectations so regularly, it is not surprising nothing was allowed to interfere with the protocol. In these months it alone represented in tangible form Britain's goodwill and determination to help its ally. It was a symbol of understanding and consensus when misunderstanding and discord prevailed. As Churchill said, while he forgave the Russians for their past 'in proportion to the number of Huns they kill', they forgave him 'In proportion to the number of tanks I send'.[4] Consequently, the Moscow protocol became inviolable, the unalterable factor in British calculations around which all other priorities had to be modified: the claims of the Service departments, in themselves legitimate and reasonable, became heretical in the threat they posed to the protocol.

It was Beaverbrook, more than anyone else, who ensured that this happened. He was the dynamic force who secured priority for the Soviet Union and maintained a constant flow of supplies from British ports, whatever the disruption of military planning. Later it was said of him that 'his effect on any given industry is of a perniciously mixed cocktail, highly stimulating for an hour or two but leaving a particularly virulent hangover for ever after.'[5] But in these months he was at his most stimulating, showing that facility for meeting crises which distinguished his days in the

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1 COS(41)43rd mtg (O), confidential annex, 4 Dec. 1941, CAB 79/86.
2 The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, D. Dilks (ed.) (London, 1971), p. 416.
3 WO report of conversations at Moscow conference, 16 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29472 N7452/3/38. To Eden's relief Stalin said he 'fully understood' the withdrawal of the offer.
4 Burns, Roosevelt; p. 187.
5 Parliamentary Debates, vol. 377, col. 849, 28 Jan. 1942. Speaker: Capt. McEwen, member for Berwick and Haddington.

Ministry of Aircraft Production in 1940. Harold Macmillan, then Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Supply, described Beaverbrook at work on his return from Moscow.

> He collected into his large room a huge conference of Army, Navy and Air Force officers, together with all the different representatives of the supply Ministries involved . . . With the help of the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries concerned an agenda was drawn up, with the subjects divided into their appropriate compartments. Senior officers and civil servants sat at a series of tables, not unlike a village whist drive, where they discussed how these onerous undertakings could be carried out and the effect upon our own position. From time to time, as when the Master of Ceremonies declares a change of trumps, they were seen to move from one table to another. These conflabations lasted for several days, or rather nights . . . [1]

In this way questions left outstanding at the Moscow conference were quickly settled.[2] Thereafter Beaverbrook maintained the momentum of supply by keeping a relentless watch on the Service departments and referring any issue in dispute to Churchill, on whom he could rely for support.[3]

Why Beaverbrook did this with such conviction is difficult to say. Certainly he had reason enough, in being a signatory of the Moscow agreement and the chairman of the A.S.E., to insist on absolute priority for Russian supplies; and no doubt his friend of many years, Maisky, did his best to impress upon him the urgency of his task. But there was a passion in Beaverbrook's conviction which suggests other reasons. His recent biographer argues that he saw championing the Russian cause as a means of strengthening his claim to be leader of the Radical Left against the Labour leaders Cripps, Attlee and Bevin.[4] On the other hand, some suspected at the time that he was building up his position against Churchill himself. Pownall explained Beaverbrook's being 'quite barmy over this aid to Russia business' by saying:

> There is a rumour going round that what the Beaver is really at is Winston, whom he would like to replace.

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1 H. Macmillan, The Blast of War 1939-1945 (London, 1967), p. 136.
2 Beaverbrook sent the Russians a list on 10 November showing a decision on all but four of the 70 items left outstanding at the Moscow conference (ASE(42)172, n.d., MT 59/551).
3 As usual Churchill was scornful of the armed forces' conservatism both about the size of their reserves and their ability to take offensive action (DO(41) 70th mtg, min. 1, 17 Nov. 1941. CAB 69/2).
4 A. J. P. Taylor, Beaverbrook, p. 491.

> He wants to beat him with the 'not enough aid to Russia' stick and is trying that weapon out first on the Chiefs of Staff.[1]

Certainly Beaverbrook's complaints to the Defence Committee in October about the failure to take diversionary action do suggest that he was trying to claim all virtue in the Russian cause for himself. To quote from his memorandum of 20 October:

> He found himself in disagreement with his colleagues on the Russian issue. He wished to take advantage of the rising temper in the country for helping Russia. Others didn't. He wanted to make a supreme effort to raise production so as to help Russia. Others didn't. He wanted to fulfil in every particular the agreement made in Moscow. Others didn't. He wished the Army to act in support of Russia. The Chiefs of Staff didn't. The cleavage between himself and his colleagues and the Chiefs of Staff was complete.[2]

Similarly Beaverbrook's statements at the time of his resignation from the government in February 1942 distorted the role of others to his own advantage. He declared that his resignation was prompted 'over all' by the Russian issue - not simply the Cabinet's reluctance to recognize the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union, but the Service departments' obstruction.

> After the Protocol had been agreed and I had returned to England, my insistence on supplies going forward tried the Army Chiefs and also the Chief of Air Staff to such an extent that both the War Office and the Air Ministry asked for revision of its terms. Ill-feeling was aroused and disputes occurred . . . The Service Ministries had all failed in their deliveries of supplies to Russia under the Moscow Protocol. And when challenged by me on this failure the Chief of Air Staff opposed the performance of the agreement.[3]

There is, however, no reason to conclude from these statements that Beaverbrook was using the Russian issue against the Prime Minister. His motives were possibly best described by Cadogan, who thought that Beaverbrook's attack on the Defence Committee in October was nothing more than an attempt to 'put a certain amount of wind up Winston' in an effort to get his support against the Air Ministry and the War Office.[4]

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1 Bond (ed.), Chief of Staff, p. 48.
2 DO(41) 67th mtg, min. 2, 20 Oct. 1941, CAB 69/8.
3 BB papers, box 20/7, Russia, 28 Feb. 1942. As Taylor has pointed out, the original of this statement was stronger in its attack, particularly on Margesson, Minister for War (Beaverbrook, p. 493).
4 Op. cit. p. 409.

Whatever did inspire Beaverbrook's outbursts, he provided the impetus without which Britain could have fallen into arrears as badly as the Americans did. His contribution was widely acknowledged. Maisky for one was dismayed when he resigned. The ambassador had little respect for Britain's military leaders[1] and put the Minister for War, Margesson, in that most odious of Soviet categories, Chamberlainites - that is, men more concerned with containing Soviet power in Europe than with co-operating with Moscow to defeat Germany.[2] Though Margesson left the government at the same time as Beaverbrook, Maisky told W. P. Crozier, editor of the Manchester Guardian, that he feared the flow of supplies to the Soviet Union would diminish.[3] He confided the same fears to the Foreign Secretary, who proved a sympathetic audience: Eden wrote to Beaverbrook on 25 February 1942,

> Maisky knows that you alone have chased, hunted, insisted, until the stuff has been collected and dispatched. Maisky is right, and I view the future dispatch of supplies to Russia with anxiety. And that puts it mildly.[4]

In fact the Foreign Secretary was moved to warn the Northern department of the Foreign Office that

> Now that Lord Beaverbrook has gone Service Departments will do all they can to hold up help to Russia. It is department's task in interest of our war effort to be constantly on the wake to counter this and not to pander to the follies of Service Departments.[5]

Even the public shared some of this anxiety. Ministry of Information reports showed that since the Minister of Aircraft Production, Colonel Moore-Brabazon, had reportedly stated in September 1941 that it was in Britain's interests for Germany and the Soviet Union to destroy each other,[6] there had been widespread questioning of the enthusiasm in government circles for helping the Russians.[7] Beaverbrook's resignation brought a fresh rash of rumours; among these, the writer George Orwell recorded, was one claiming that 'The Army insisted on Beaverbrook's removal because he was sending all the aeroplanes etc. to Russia instead of to Libya and the Far

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1 W. P. Crozier, Off the Record: Political Interviews, 1933-1943 (London, 1973), p. 304.
2 I. Maisky, Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador (London, 1967), p. 251.
3 Crozier, p. 302.
4 BB papers, BBK, C/17.
5 Minute by Eden, 24 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32933 N994/178/38.
6 See W. P. and Z. K. Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations (London, 1943) pp. 684-6.
7 HIWR no. 58, 3-10 Nov. 1941, INFO 1/292B.

East.'[1]

Beaverbrook therefore was invaluable both as a symbol of the government's commitment to supply the Soviet Union and for the singlemindedness he brought to this task. Nonetheless, his achievement must not be allowed to distort and eclipse the effort made by the Service departments, for although they defended their interests as passionately as Beaverbrook did the Russians', they did not, as Beaverbrook implied, oppose the protocol. Their disputes with him were carried on within the framework of the commitment to the Russians and were simply interdepartmental jostling as to how best to adjust their limited resources, a conflict which at the time Beaverbrook recognized to be healthy.[2] His retrospective accounts of Service department 'obstruction' are exaggerated, reflecting his intense dislike of air marshals, whom, as he told Harold Balfour, were 'like a red flag to a bull' to him.[3] His recollections were arguably more the result of his fury at the Chiefs' of Staff refusal to invade Norway in the autumn of 1941 as he wished,[4] than of any dispute over the protocol. He himself admitted that his reactions were often irrational, those of 'a victim of the Furies', 'a particularly dangerous wave that breaks viciously on the rocks' of New Brunswick, 'the rage'.[5] Eden's and Maisky's testimonials aside, there is little objective evidence to support his claim that the Service departments obstructed the protocol. There is no record that Dill and Portal had reservations, and the War Office recorded on 8 October that it accepted even the increased commitment to the Russians for the following two months.[6] The Director of Military Operations and Plans moreover assured Churchill that he thought Britain 'would get a better dividend out of keeping Russia in the war than we could by sending the equipment elsewhere'.[7] The Air Council for its part allotted to the Russians far greater quantities of ammunition than they thought reasonable for the equipment supplied,[8] and Sinclair declared to

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1 G. Orwell, The Collected Essays, Vol. 2, My Country Right or Left 1940-1943 (Penguin, 1970), p. 465.
2 Interview of author with Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan, Mar. 1974.
3 Balfour's Moscow diary 1941, D.8, 23 Sept. 1941 (Beaverbrook library).
4 For military opposition to this project see A. Bryant, The Turn of the Tide 1939-1943 (London, 1957), pp. 261-2.
5 K. Young, Churchill and Beaverbook: A Study in Friendship and Politics (Great Britain, 1966), p. 214.
6 Mtg of 8 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580.
7 Kennedy, The Business of War, p. 167.
8 Mtg of Air Council, 14 Oct. 1941, AIR 8/1000.

Beaverbrook at the height of the debate over the Airacobras:

> Why should we have a disagreement over this? I agree with your policy of helping Russia to the utmost, I am resolved to give full and punctual effect to the Agreement you signed with the Russians at Moscow . . . [1]

Undoubtedly, though, the decisive testimony to the Service department's support for the Russians lies in what they achieved. For in these months, though flooded with new requests and conflicting priorities,[2] all asserted by the Russians through a confusing number of channels,[3] they managed to supply munitions to schedule. Admittedly their backlog at the end of the year was 45 aircraft, 35 tanks and 436 lorries[4] but this was not their fault. Lorries had been provided in the numbers required, but since they were low on the Russian list, they had not been given a high priority for shipping.[5] In any case it was physically impossible to send them in the numbers demanded - 3000 by April 1942 - until the Russians agreed to accept them at least partially broken down, and this they did not do until January 1942.[6] As for tanks, 200 were made available in December but they proved insufficient at the last moment when the Americans, who were to provide 50 in repayment of the 'loan' to them,[7] defaulted on this late in the month.[8] By then there was not time enough to 'Russify' extra tanks in the United Kingdom, and tanks from Canada were delayed by the growing congestion in U.S. ports. Similar problems confounded the Air Ministry. Its calculations were disrupted by the Airacobras' failure, and when it retrieved Hurricanes earmarked for the Middle East,[9] it met a severe snowstorm which delayed the delivery of these aircraft to the ports. Not that this excuse impressed Beaverbrook at all: he told Balfour:

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1 Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 19 Oct. 1941, BB papers, Air Ministry D/173.

2 Maisky gave Russian priorities as planes, tanks, anti-tank guns and rifles, aluminium, cobalt and rubber, in that order (ASE(41)2, 29 Oct. 1941, CAB 92/1). Amtorg, the official Soviet trading organization in the United States, however, gave trucks a higher priority than all these (tel. BILGE 632, 28 Oct. 1941, MT 63/237).

3 Beaverbrook to Maisky, 12 Feb. 1942, BT 28/144.

4 BB papers, BBK/D82, file 24/D6, 26 Jan. 1942.

5 Lord Leathers (Minister of War Transport) to Beaverbrook, 30 Jan. 1942, BB papers, loc. cit.

6 WP(42) 417, 17 Sept. 1942, CAB 66/28.

7 ASE(41) 5th mtg, min. 6, 9 Dec. 1941, CAB 92/1.

8 ASE(42)8, 6 Jan. 1942, CAB 92/3.

9 Archibald Rowlands (Permanent Secretary, MAP) to Beaverbrook, MAP 379, 12 Jan. 1942, BB papers, D/104.

> If the Russians fight in the snow, surely we can move aeroplanes in the snow.
>
> It would be a terrible confession if we had to write to Stalin and tell him that Harold Balfour, whose cheek he kissed, is unable to provide the planes he promised because of snow.[1]

Nonetheless, whatever Beaverbrook might say, it was American failures and the practical difficulties of delivering the munitions which caused the backlogs, not wilful obstruction on any individual's part.

In fact the problems of delivering the munitions were emerging as the real obstacle to the fulfilment of the protocol. Many people had predicted that it would be so, and it had actually been suggested before the Moscow conference that these considerations, rather than the West's capacity to give, should determine the size of the offer. The director-general of programmes in the Ministry of Supply, Sir Walter Layton, had warned on 7 September:

> Russia was defeated in the last war through the breakdown of transport. The first task, before a programme of supply can be planned, is a searching report on the state of the Russian railways, the availability of rolling stock and the capacity of the key ports.
>
> The supply programme should be matched to these possibilities.[2]

Of course the protocol was not determined on these principles, given the Russians' secrecy on all domestic matters. After its signature, therefore, there remained the problems of ensuring that the ports of north Russia and the Persian Gulf could receive the munitions; ascertaining what shipping the Russians had available; liaising with the Americans; finding merchant shipping suitable for Arctic service; and providing naval escorts. All these problems indeed had been more than obvious before the Moscow conference, but it had been politically judicious to ignore them.

From the start, for instance, it had been obvious that the Russians would be reluctant to agree to a common pool of shipping. This was demanded not only by Britain's general shortage of merchant shipping but by the lack of the Russian ships fitted with cranes to unload heavy machinery. If the British were to provide these types of ships, they expected the Russians to allow their ships to be used in the Atlantic. However, although the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, A. Mikoyan, showed some interest in

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1 26 Jan. 1942, BB papers, BBK/D82, file 24/D6.
2 BB papers, Sir Walter Layton file.

this late in June,[1] Cripps soon reported that the Russians seemed to fear the British would use ships in a pool for their own purposes.[2] This attitude persisted even when the British asked for help in specific tasks like shipping the Hurricanes and Tomahawks promised in July and August.[3] The Russians then produced the remarkably irrelevant suggestion that they should provide only the ships which were necessary to ship return cargoes, such as timber, from the Soviet Union to Britain. As Cripps pointed out to them this meant that convoys would be based on the quantity of Soviet supplies for Great Britain not vice versa. 'Carriage of supplies to the U.S.S.R. would become a secondary consideration.'[4] Despite this the Russians remained unenthusiastic about pooling shipping and it was not until 18 November that an Anglo-Soviet shipping committee was finally instituted to co-ordinate the two countries' resources.[5]

In the interim the British had to go ahead unilaterally providing their own shipping to capitalize on the few months before the northern port of Archangel was closed by ice.[6] At the same time they undertook, as a goodwill gesture to dispel Russian suspicions, to ship jute and lead from India and Burma to the Persian Gulf.[7] They could not, however, do the same for raw materials from the Far East since British vessels sailing to Vladivostock might well be provocative to the Japanese. This route, therefore, was declared the sole responsibility of Russian or neutral vessels,[8] and though the Russians discharged this responsibility in a 'generally satisfactory' manner up until Pearl Harbor,[9] there were still reports late in September of 4,000 tons of lead and 1,375 tons of tin waiting at Rangoon, Singapore and Penang for want of Russian ships.[10] Similarly, though the Russians did provide

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1 Cripps to Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW), no. 80 ARFAR, 30 June 1941, FO 371 29566 N4074/3084/38.
2 Cripps to MEW, no. 108 ARFAR, 6 July 1941, FO 371 29564.
3 Cadogan to Maisky, 2 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29568 N4319/3084/38.
4 Sir S. Cripps, no. 229 ARFAR MOSSY, 7 Aug. 1941, FO 371 29569 N4480/3084/38.
5 Interview between Maisky and Col. J. J. Llewellin (Parl'y Sec'y, MWT), 18 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29581 N6757/3084/38. The committee actually met for the first time on 4 December.
6 MEW to His Majesty's Representative (HMR) Moscow, no. 407 ARFAR MOSSY, 17 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29576, N5525/3084/38.
7 MEW to HMR Moscow, ARFAR 407 MOSSY, 17 Sept. 1941, ibid.
8 SOS to Governor, Burma, 10 July 1941, FO 371 29566 N3852/3084/38.
9 ASE(42)172, n.d, MT 59/551.
10 MEW to HMR Moscow, ARFAR MOSSY 442, 26 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29576 N5629/3084/38.

ships to carry supplies from the American seaboard, their contribution was again inadequate. The British shipping representative in New York reported on 23 September:

> The whole question of supply tonnage for Russian shipments from America is becoming acute, Maritime Commission have asked Russians to declare what tonnage they have available but it is improbable that it would be sufficiency. If Maritime Commission has to find Tonnage elsewhere it will undoubtedly come from Tonnage intended for North Atlantic.[1]

By the time of the Moscow conference therefore, the problems inherent in increasing the volume of supplies for the Soviet Union were clear. Nonetheless a commitment was undertaken which involved on Russian calculations an average total import of 500,000 tons a month.[2] The Russians promised that they would help by providing some shipping to serve in both the Atlantic and the Pacific,[3] but the tonnage they offered was only a small proportion of the 1.5 million tons the British considered necessary.[4] They and the Americans made it clear that, though they would assist the Russians, they had no responsibility to deliver the supplies; their obligation was simply to make supplies 'available at the centres of production'.[5] Predictably, though, this proviso was not invoked in the coming months, though members of the mission to Moscow had thought it a genuine safeguard of their interests.[6] Instead President Roosevelt instructed the War Department that shipments to the Soviet Union in October must have precedence over all other shipments of defence material[7] and the British found their import programme suffering from the diversion of both their own and American shipping to the Russians.[8] Within two months in fact Maisky was claiming that it was the West's obligation to provide shipping and that to interpret the Moscow agreement in any other way was excessively legalistic.[9]

For the British this naturally posed considerable problems.

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1 Sparks N.Y. to Shpmdr London, 1033 AMAST 751, 23 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29577 N5699/3084/38.
2 BAR(T)1, 1 Oct. 1941, CAB 99/7.
3 British Supply Mission, Moscow (Lord BB) to FO, no. 42 LINEN, 3 Oct. 1941, FO 371 29577 N5861/3084/38.
4 Gwyer, p. 160.
5 Minute E. P. Donaldson (A.S.E. secretariat) to BB, 1 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7299/3084/38; Gwyer, p. 160.
6 Britlistaff, Moscow to CAS, AIR 1077, 3 Oct. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
7 Pogue, George C. Marshall, p. 73.
8 Minutes of 52nd mtg of British Supply Council in North America, NAS(41)90, 3 Dec. 1941, CAB 92/30.
9 Minute Donaldson to BB, 1 Dec. 1941, loc. cit.

Although their shipping losses unexpectedly declined in the last quarter of 1941,[1] the provision of the right type of shipping and escorts for convoys to north Russia remained problematical. Even when the Americans began in September 1941, under the Western Hemisphere plan no. 4, to provide escorts for Atlantic convoys, the Home Fleet was stretched to the utmost by the convoys it was then running to north Russia.[2] Its problems were intensified when the Russians requested at Moscow that 270,000 tons a month[3] - including all war materials, most raw materials and half the promised food - be shipped to Archangel.[4] This obliged the Admiralty to shorten the northern convoy cycle from forty to ten days and reduce the Home Fleet's defences against a breakout by the German fleet into the Atlantic. Not until December, when the Arctic weather had deteriorated and the perpetual night descended, did the Admiralty agree to allow vessels to proceed east of Bear Island unescorted.[5]

Taxing as these problems of naval escort were, though, they were overshadowed in these first months of the Moscow protocol by the problems of merchant shipping. The British were inexperienced in the Arctic, and though they provided an average of only seven merchant ships a month in the last five months of 1941 and about six a month in 1942, extensive adjustment of both their methods and equipment was required. Hulls had to be reinforced to withstand the pressure of ice, propellers had to be made of bronze or cast iron to prevent their snapping or buckling in the cold, and ships had to be specially heated.[6] Ballast had to be provided for the return journey to keep ship propellers below the level of the ice, for although the Russians undertook to supply return cargoes, they could never provide them on a scale to ensure all ships were adequately ballasted.[7] New techniques of stowage had to be adopted. The first cargoes of tanks and aircraft arrived in north Russia damaged - and the Russians, as has been seen, were quick to make political capital of this. The British had not realized that even after draining of the engine block, the Matilda tank

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1 Gwyer, pp. 12-15.
2 Letter Pound to Admiral Andrew Cunningham (C-in-C Mediterranean Fleet), 3 Sept. 1941, ADD MSS 52561, British Museum.
3 Leighton and Coakley, p. 114.
4 Tel from Lord Beaverbrook, no. 42 LINEN, loc. cit.
5 Roskill, The War at Sea, vol. 1, pp. 492, 495.
6 Behrens, Merchant Shipping, pp. 254-5.
7 FO to Moscow, ARFAR no. 45 MOSSY, 27 Sept. 1941, FO 371 N5405/3084/38; Interview Maisky-Llewellin, 18 Nov. 1941, loc. cit; ASE(42)41, 7 Feb. 1942, CAB 92/3.

retained a little water which, if not treated with anti-freeze liquid, could crack the engine case.[1] Aircraft carried on deck were damaged by the heavy seas or ruined by ice.[2] Deck stowage had to be abandoned[3] but the normal British packing case, made of plywood in an effort to save timber, was too fragile to survive a journey in the hold.[4] Markings on cases were not distinct enough, nor accompanying instructions precise enough, for Russians unfamiliar with the equipment.[5] Some of these problems were easily eradicated, the results simply of excessive speed in packing and unfamiliarity with Arctic conditions.[6]

There remained, however, the more serious problems of the primitive state of Archangel's berthing facilities and the freezing of that port from December to May. Here Russian sensitivity and honour intervened to complicate the issue. Maisky always insisted that Archangel would be able to cope with any quantity of equipment the British could ship. The Ministry of War Transport on the other hand, knowing that in the past Archangel had been mainly a timber port,[7] had severe reservations about this. It wished every ship sailing to the port to have its own crane capable of lifting the heaviest of its cargo. This rendered five of the six Russian ships provided for the northern run unsuitable,[8] and since horrific reports of delay were being reported from Archangel, the Ministry of War Transport feared the consequences of sending their own ships in unlimited numbers. It was, for instance

> taking six weeks to discharge from an American ship a single piece of machinery weighing sixty-eight tons - for the only way of getting it out was to raise it alternatively at either end by means of a thirty-five-ton crane, while sixty truck-loads of timber were jammed beneath it.[9]

The Ministry of War Transport's other fear was that the Russians would prove unable to move all the shipping once the port of Archangel froze over. The Russians insisted at the Moscow conference that they would be able to discharge eighteen ships simultaneously before the harbour froze around 15 December and twelve ships

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1 Draft telegram, ASE to Cripps, Kuibyshev, BB papers, box 19/10.
2 Letter Llewellin to BB, 10 Nov. 1941, BB papers, BBK D/170.
3 ASE to Kuibyshev, no. 95 MOSSY, 26 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29580 N6207/3084/38.
4 AM to Rowan, 19 Feb. 1942, PREM 3 401/4.
5 30 MM to AM, AIR 1563, 13 Nov. 1941, AIR 8/1000.
6 So an enquiry set up by Churchill and Beaverbrook to investigate the damage reported by Stalin concluded. 31 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 401/4.
7 CAS(41)34th mtg, min. 2, 2 Oct. 1941, FO 371 29577 N5835/3084/38.
8 Mtg between Kharmalov and Llewellin, early Nov. 1941, FO 371 29581 N6519/3084/38.
9 Behrens, p. 254.

simultaneously after that date.[1] Later in October Maisky went further and claimed there would be ten icebreakers available and that the capacity of Archangel would be fifty ships a month. The British, however, knew of only three icebreakers and thought the capacity of the port when these were operating was more likely to be six to twelve ships a month.[2] The Ministry of War Transport's representative in Archangel in fact reported that the port would be able to receive only two-thirds after December and one-third in the New Year of the ships needed to cover the military programme.[3] For even if Maisky's estimate of icebreakers proved correct, then the berths and the lack of skilled labour would become the bottleneck.[4]

The Americans were reluctant to question the Russians' estimates,[5] but the Ministry of War Transport urged the Russians to allow some ships to be diverted to Murmansk. This port was ice-free, had a maximum capacity of sixteen ships a month[6] and cut five days off the return journey from Britain.[7] The Russians were loath to use it, however, since Murmansk was vulnerable to attack from German aeroplanes in northern Norway and was connected to southern Russia by a single railway, threatened by the fighting on the Finnish front. They gave their agreement 'in principle' to using it early in November[8] but, as many Allied representatives in Moscow were to learn to their frustration, this was an elusive concession. Some three weeks later the only floating 35-ton crane the Russians had capable of hoisting 26-ton Matildas was sent to Archangel,[9] and traffic continued to move to this port. By this time there were only two icebreakers operating there, the Lenin and the Stalin, and one of these was under repair. 'Can one imagine a more unsuitable time for refitting?' the S.B.N.O. in Archangel moaned.[10] Another icebreaker, the Montcalm, which had been ordered earlier from Canada was still there being reconditioned at this time.[11] In consequence

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1 BAR(T)1, CAB 99/7.
2 ASE(41)1st mtg, min. 5, 29 Oct. 1941, CAB 92/1.
3 FO to Kuibyshev, no. 11 MOSSY, FO 371 29580 N6207/3084/38.
4 ASE to Kuibyshev, 1 Nov. 1941, ibid.; J. P. Maclay to MWT, Telegram 18, 4 Nov. 1941, ADM 1/11022.
5 Sparks N.Y. to Shpmdr, London, BILGE 638 MOSSY, 3 Nov. 1941, MT 63/237.
6 ASE(41)33, 8 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7178/3084/38.
7 Private letter of Senior British Naval Officer (SBNO), Murmansk, to Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), 14 Oct. 1941, FO 371 29581 N6520/3084/38.
8 ASE to Kuibyshev, no. 45 MOSSY, 6 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29581 N6520/3084/38.
9 Letter SBNO, N. Russia, to DNI, 26 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7728/3084/38.
10 Letter from SBNO, N. Russia, 12 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7436/3084/38.
11 Donaldson to Beaverbrook, 18 Feb. 1942, BB papers, box 19/11.

all ships of convoys PQ 3 and PQ 4 were ready in the third week of December to leave Archangel for the United Kingdom but could not because the Lenin was preoccupied with bringing in the inward PQ 5.[1] This it could do only one ship at a time because the ice closing in behind that ship crushed any other ship following it.[2] On 18 December Cripps finally got Mikoyan to agree to the immediate diversion of three or four ships to Murmansk,[3] and convoys arriving early in January all went to that port. Russian agreement came too late, however, to prevent nine ships, six of them their own, from being frozen in at Archangel.[4]

This experience brought home to the British the need for other reliable routes by which to deliver supplies to the Soviet Union. All alternative routes, however, seemed as problematical as the northern one. Vladivostock, which the Russians estimated could receive some 220,000 tons a month,[5] was dependent on Japanese connivance and could not, for that reason, be used for military supplies. Flying aircraft across Africa involved lengthy tropicalization and reconversion of the planes, and in any case crowded a route on which the Middle East depended.[6] The Russians were suspicious of any plan to fly aircraft from Alaska to Siberia: Harriman, who suggested it to Stalin in September, thought this was because of the fear of provoking the Japanese,[7] and in fact it was not until October 1942 that the Americans succeeded in operating this route. In 1941 meanwhile, the only alternative which offered any real prospects of supplying the Soviet Union was the route through Iran, and it was to this that the Americans decided late in November to divert all their aircraft.[8]

Persian Gulf communications, however, were so primitive at this time that they made the hazards of the northern route seem mere inconvenience. In the words of the historian of the Persia and Iraq Command, the country possessed

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1 Letter from SBNO, 12 Dec. 1941, loc. cit.
2 Letter SBNO, Murmansk, to DNI, 14 Oct. 1941, FO 371 29581, N6520/3084/38.
3 Sir S. Cripps, no. 19, 20 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7339/3084/38.
4 Summary of position of ships at or en route to Russian ports, 22 Jan. 1942, BB papers, BBK D/170.
5 Gwyer, p. 160.
6 Conversation of Balfour and Harriman, 5 Feb. 1942, BB papers, box 19/11.
7 Supplement to memorandum by Harriman on mtg with Stalin, BB papers, box 20/6, Russia.
8 Air Ministry to 30 Military Mission, X.877, 20 Nov. 1941, FO 371 29581 N6722/3084/38.

> nearly all the obstacles which Nature devises against travel: deserts with no water and no landmarks, deserts with soft and treacherous sands, malarious bogs; not one range but series of ranges of high, precipitous mountains, often piled with snow or drenched from the snow thawing, the home of bears and eagles; sandstorms, rainstorms, blizzards of snow and hail; the highest and lowest temperatures man can survive.[1]

In keeping with this, the port, road and rail facilities were all primitive. There was only one port of any size, Basra, and this was in Iraq, on the wrong side of the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, and connected to Iran by a circuitous route.[2] The roads inland from Khorramshahr and Bushire, themselves scarcely developed, were rudimentary[3] and the supply of lorries to utilize them woefully inadequate. The Persian railway, connecting the capital, Teheran, with the coast, had a capacity of only two hundred tons[4] or two trains, a day, one of which was needed to maintain civilian imports.[5] Its northern terminus was 300 miles short of Tabriz where the railway from the Caucasus terminated.[6] Its gradients were steep,[7] its supply of powerful diesel engines non-existent[8] and its capacity for steam engines limited by the scarcity of water on the route.[9] This was the route which the Allies estimated could eventually carry 60,000 tons of their supplies a month,[10] and for which the A.S.E., confronted with a new threat to the Vladivostock route after Pearl Harbor, set an even more optimistic target of 100,000 tons a month by the spring of 1942.[11]

Thanks to their intervention in Iran in August and September,

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1 Paiforce. Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command, 1941-1946 (London: HMSO, 1948), p. 75.
2 E. R. Stettinius, Jnr, Lend-Lease: Weapon for Victory (New York, 1944), p. 214.
3 T. H. Vail Motter, The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia: U.S. Army in World War II: The Middle East Theater (Washington, 1952), p.33.
4 Ibid., p. 331.
5 Mtg of sub-committee on communications, CAS, 29 Aug. 1941, MISC (41)1/6, CAB 78/1.
6 Manchester Guardian, 31 Oct. 1941.
7 Hankey report on Middle East railway projects, 2 Sept. 1941, BB papers, box 19/1.
8 Paiforce, p. 103.
9 Ibid., p. 100.
10 Gwyer, p. 161.
11 ASE(41)5th mtg, mins. 3 and 4, 9 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7141/3084/38. This was the objective for protocol supplies only. A further 25,000 tons a month was to be added to this for civil requirements and a further unstated tonnage for military forces. The overall target for 1 April 1942 was 200,000 tons via Persia and Iraq. (ASE(42)114, 26 Apr. 1942, CAB 92/4).

PRINCIPAL RUSSIAN-AID ROUTES

Road
Railway
Barge route
13,352 Spot height in feet

U. S. S. R.
TURKEY
CASPIAN SEA
U. S. S. R.
AFGHANISTAN
INDIA
IRAN
IRAQ
SAUDI ARABIA
KUWAIT
PERSIAN GULF
ZAGROS MOUNTAINS
ELBURZ MOUNTAINS
Euphrates River
Tigris River
45°
50°
55°
60°
35°
30°
Dzhulfa
Tabriz
Mianeh
Pahlevi
Kazian
Bandar Shah
Chalus
Nau Shahr
Kazvin
18,934
Shahrud
Meshed
Mosul
Rowanduz
TEHERAN
Samnan
Garmsar
Hamadan
11,719
Khanaqin
Malayer
Qum
Ba'quba
BAGHDAD
13,352
Kut al Imara
Andimeshk
Isfahan
Ahwaz
Bandar Shahpur
Basra
Khorramshahr
Kuwait
Shiraz
Bushire
Zahidan
Nokkundi
FROM KARACHI
0 100 200 300 Miles

the British and Russians had the right to control these communications. The development of them in fact soon took over from eliminating German influence as their main motive for invading the country.[1] In September the British set about increasing the capacity of Basra[2] and other ports.[3] They assisted the Iranian government in improving the roads and they collected, under the auspices of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, a fleet of lorries capable of carrying several thousands of tons of supplies.[4] They opened a route from Meshed in north-eastern Iran to Nokkundi in India, despite the reservations of the Indian government about the strategic implications for the future of opening its northern frontier.[5] This route was intended to carry only 2,000 tons a month of supplies from the Far East,[6] but by November the British were considering using it to carry lorries assembled in Karachi.[7] They enlisted the help of the Americans, who extended Lend-Lease to the British in the Middle East on 13 September[8] and agreed at the London discussions that month to provide lorries, personnel and equipment to help develop the routes, other than the Nokkundi - Meshed one, to a capacity of 2,000 tons a day.[9]

The complexity of the problems in the Persian Gulf area, however, ensured that for all this activity the capacity of the routes did not rise quickly. Skilled labour was scarce and the tools of the native labour force primitive. Mobility in many cases meant a donkey and tribal raiders operated unchecked in many districts. There were continual clashes of priority between British military interests and civilian needs on the one hand and Russian supplies on the other. The British army in Persia and Iraq consumed much of the capacity of Basra[10] and its plans for intervening in the Caucasus threatened to devour even more. The War Office, which was responsible for improving communications in the area,[11] was preoccupied

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1 See Woodward, II, pp. 23-7. The way in which British motivation changed is clear in Churchill's statement to the Defence Committee on 20 August: 'Delay in the expulsion of the Germans from Persia would be dangerous, and it was essential we should have one clear channel by which we could send supplies to Russia.' (DO(41)59th mtg, min. 1, CAB 69/2).

2 Motter, pp. 32-3.

3 Paiforce, p. 82.

4 CAS(41)33rd mtg, 23 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29576 N5574/3084/38.

5 COS(41)388th mtg, min. 5, 14 Nov. 1941, CAB 79/15.

6 COS(41)296th mtg, min. 4, 25 Aug. 1941, CAB 79/13.

7 ASE(41)9, 11 Nov. 1941, CAB 92/1.

8 Motter, p. 31.

9 CAS(41)208, 21 Sept. 1941, FO 371 29576 N5574/3084/38.

10 Motter, pp. 33-4.

11 WP(G)(41)111, 15 Oct. 1941, FO 371 29583 N7486/3084/38.

with developing other facilities in Palestine, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan.[1] The Iranian population resented the preference given to Russian supplies and 'intense anti-British feeling in places where bread and sugar are almost unobtainable' was reported by the ambassador in Teheran in December.[2] The plethora of agencies created by the British and Americans created further problems. By the end of January 1942 there were two American missions in Iran and inevitably jurisdictional disputes arose with the British 10th Army, to whom they were subordinate, and the U.K.C.C. The practice of leasing contracts for developing communications to civilian agencies further increased the likelihood of duplication of functions.[3]

Most significant in the failure of the Persian Gulf route to develop quickly, however, was the delay in the arrival of essential equipment, particularly from the United States. By the end of November the shortage of shipping and the congestion in America's eastern ports was such that they were in arrears even with their shipments of protocol munitions—of the 242 aircraft delivered to the ports, for instance, only 63 had been sent; of 181 tanks, only 98; and of 8,859 lorries only 2,261 were on their way to the Soviet Union.[4] What is more, to ship even these small totals the Americans had had to call on the British for shipping.[5] Not surprisingly, therefore, the shipment of lorries and locomotives to the Persian Gulf was neglected and for many months this limited the capacity of the routes to the north. As the War Office pointed out in the following spring when the port capacity was 97,000 tons a month but the road and rail capacity only 62,000 tons:

> the expansion of transportation facilities through Persia is in the main limited, not so much by the rate of construction or repair of the roads and railways, as by the rate of delivery of lorries and rolling stock from America.[6]

By the end of 1941, therefore, the Persian Gulf route was far from being able to bear a major part of the delivery of supplies to the Soviet Union. In fact it took only 3.7 per cent of the

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1 COS(41)535, 3 Sept. 1941, CAB 80/30.
2 Teheran to FO, no. 1337, 24 Dec. 1941, ASE(41)46, CAB 92/1.
3 Motter, pp. 31, 43, 185.
4 FRUS, 1941, I, pp. 862-3; BB papers, box 19/11, table A, 27 Nov. 1941. These figures, submitted to Beaverbrook, may not be strictly accurate, as the A.S.E. received no comprehensive report on shipments from the United States until well into 1942. But they certainly reflect the dire situation which later statistics confirmed (see ASE(42)13,28, CAB 92/3).
5 Minute Donaldson to BB, BB papers, box 19/11.
6 ASE(42)114, 26 April 1942, CAB 92/4.

total shipped from the Western Hemisphere in 1941,[1] and its progress was limited even further when the Russians asked in December for other routes to be favoured in preference to it. They requested that the Persian route should carry only 2,000 trucks and 100 aircraft a month as well as raw materials from India, and that all these should pass through the western route rather than the remote Nokkundi and Meshed.[2] They retracted this decision in February 1942[3] but by this time shipments had been reduced and future development disrupted.[4] The British and Americans therefore were forced into greater reliance on the Arctic route at a time when its technical problems and dangers could only increase with the approach of summer.

At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, therefore, the Moscow protocol was emerging as a drain on shipping and naval resources rather than on munitions and raw materials. This was a pattern which was to continue and intensify in the early months of 1942. Although the problems of allocating munitions to the Russians did not diminish - indeed with the Japanese attack they became more acute than ever - these did not undermine the protocol. The British government's will to meet its commitments remained as strong as ever. The rock on which the protocol did founder was that of delivering the munitions; for although the British were willing to make great sacrifices on the Russians' behalf, there was one thing in which their priority was absolute. This was their naval security and this in the middle of 1942 the protocol came to challenge.

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1 Motter, Appendix A, Table 1.
2 C-in-C India to WO, VVY/802/Q, rec. 15 Jan. 1942, AIR 20/3910; Motter, p. 142.
3 Kuibyshev to ASE, no. 112 MOSSY, 18 Feb. 1942, MT 59/79.
4 Sparks N.Y. to Shpmdr, London, 14310 AMAST 1397 MOSSY, 23 Jan. 1942, MT 63/237.

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During the latter half of 1941 Britain's policy towards the Soviet Union had been remarkable for the subjection of her own immediate military aims to the long-term rewards of supporting the Red Army. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor it became even more notable in this respect, for despite the rapid worsening of Britain's position, the Moscow protocol remained almost unchanged. Admittedly Pearl Harbor was not all loss for the British - assuming the Americans first concentrated on defeating Germany, their entry into the war made victory in Europe certain. But in the immediate sense Britain was further weakened and extended with the Japanese attack. Thanks to the starving of the Far East in favour of the Middle East, British forces faced humiliating defeat at the hands of the Japanese unless they were rapidly reinforced. In these circumstances some military circles argued that the basis of the commitment to the Soviet Union had been invalidated. Now that Britain was retreating and the Red Army actually advancing, there was little logic in continuing unchecked the flow of supplies. Churchill and his immediate colleagues did not agree. Following the pattern of the past three months the Prime Minister ignored military reservations and ordered that the protocol be fulfilled in its original form. Roosevelt did likewise in the United States and together he and Churchill established the principle that nothing other than a dire threat to the Allies' vital interests could justify modification of the protocol. Not until July 1942 were the problems of delivering the munitions deemed to pose this threat and so in the first six months of the year, as the British retreated in Malaya, Burma and the Middle East and as the Americans abandoned the Philippines, the commitment to the Soviet Union remained unchanged.

For the British, maintaining this commitment in December 1941 involved making a courageous, if almost inevitable, decision. For while it was unthinkable to withdraw support for the Russians, given their central place in strategy for 1942, the British could not be sure of American support. Until Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff went to Washington late in December, they did not know what the Americans' strategic priorities would be; nor could they predict with any accuracy the implications of the Far Eastern war for their own supply position. Their only certainty was that the U.S. armed forces would demand for themselves some Lend-Lease munitions - the

freeze on Defence Aid shipments immediately after the Japanese attack showed this clearly, even though it was temporary.[1] Nonetheless, before the British delegation left for Washington, the Soviet embassy had been assured that shipments to the Soviet Union would go ahead as planned in December. What is more the Russians were promised increased quantities of ammunition for tanks, aircraft and Besa guns, even though this was in very short supply.[2] The Chiefs' of Staff attitude, as they stated in their review of strategy prepared on the Atlantic voyage, was that it was

> essential to afford the Russians such assistance as will enable them to maintain their hold on Leningrad, Moscow and the oilfields of the Caucasus.[3]

Churchill agreed, arguing:

> Hitler's failure and losses in Russia are the prime fact in the war at this time. . . . Neither Great Britain nor the United States have any part to play in this event, except to make sure that we send, without fail and punctually, the supplies we have promised. In this way alone shall we hold our influence over Stalin and be able to weave the mighty Russian effort into the general texture of the war.[4]

As they had in the previous September, Churchill and his advisers assumed that the Americans would agree with them and that the cost to Britain of their decision would soon be repaid by enormously increased American production.

In fact these assumptions were largely vindicated by the subsequent meeting in Washington. President Roosevelt proved to be in favour of continuing aid to the Soviet Union since he accepted that the defeat of the major Axis power, Germany, was the Allies' first concern.[5] He ignored the caution of Marshall and Stimson who felt that, though Soviet needs should be met to the 'maximum extent possible', the protocol should be revised in the light of 'imperative' U.S. needs.[6] Instead the President assured the

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1 Lukas, Air Force Aspects . . ., p. 114; Stettinius, Lend-Lease, p. 204.
2 ASE to Kuibyshev, no. 9, 13 Dec. 1941, FO 371 29582 N6989/3084/38.
3 Gwyer, Grand Strategy, p. 346.
4 Churchill, III, p. 574.
5 For a description of the strategic discussions at the Arcadia conference see Gwyer, chs. XIV and XV.
6 Leighton and Coakley, Global Logistics, p. 552; Lukas, p. 115. Later Stimson said of himself:' . . . in Lend-Lease transactions he sometimes found himself the advocate of the Army's needs against those of the Russians; but this was the necessary result of his duty to equip the Army, and implied no disagreement whatever with the policy of aid to Russia.' (Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War, New York, 1947, p.526).

Soviet ambassador on 8 December that aid to the Red Army would continue and deliveries of munitions were in fact resumed within ten days.[1] Further on 28 December Roosevelt ruled that

> the Soviet Aid Program as provided in the Protocol Agreement be reestablished beginning January 1. (Existing deficiencies must be made up not later than April 1.) The whole Russian program is so vital to our interest that I know that only the gravest consideration will lead you to recommend withholding longer the munitions our Government has promised to the U.S.S.R.[2]

Any delays which might be inevitable in delivery, Roosevelt added, should be matched by increased shipments of other supplies.[3]

This ruling, later events in the 'Arcadia' conference showed, meant that shipments to the Soviet Union were given preference over all commitments except the reinforcement of fighting fronts like the Middle East. Roosevelt would not consider the suggestion Marshall made on 12 January 1942 to reduce protocol shipments by 30 per cent over the next three months in order to send American troops to New Caledonia. Important though this operation was in view of Australia's inability to find troops,[4] he ordered Hopkins and Beaverbrook to 'find ships'[5] rather than default on the protocol. The number of ships required was only seven, and the maintenance of supplies to Russia, he said, was 'a moral obligation which could hardly be avoided'.[6]

At the same time Roosevelt agreed with the British that his own country's production targets would have to be radically revised. For this much of the credit must go to Beaverbrook who once again proved to be 'a power house with regard to what could be done and what had to be done'.[7] Realizing that Britain would have to suffer some temporary cutback in supplies from the United States, Beaverbrook nonetheless used the figures of Jean Monnet of the British Supply Mission in Washington to raise American sights for the future. He showed Roosevelt and Hopkins that the targets of the Office of Production Management for 1942 and 1943 could be raised by 50 per cent;[8] as a result the plans the President announced to the Congress on 6 January were far in excess of any his administration had contemplated. Production for 1942 was set at 45,000 aircraft

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1 Lukas, pp. 115-6.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 552.
3 Lukas, pp. 116-7.
4 WW 9th mtg (Arcadia), 12 Jan. 1942, CAB 99/17.
5 Leighton and Coakley, p. 555.
6 WW 9th mtg.
7 Vice-President Wallace, quoted in footnote to p. 136 of Foreign Relations of the United States: Conferences at Washington 1941-1943 and Casablanca 1943 (Washington, 1968).
8 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 342.

instead of 28,600; 45,000 tanks instead of 20,400; 20,000 anti-aircraft guns in place of 6,300; 14,900 anti-tank guns instead of 7,000; and 8 million deadweight tons of merchant shipping against a previous estimate of 6 million tons. For 1943 the targets were even higher - 100,000 aircraft, 75,000 tanks, 35,000 anti-aircraft guns and 10 million tons of shipping.[1] These figures did much to justify Churchill's decision to continue supplying the Soviet Union. Admittedly they were more the result of political impulse than rational planning, but they offered the hope that Britain's needs could still be met from even a reduced proportion of American production.

This hope was strengthened by the American's agreement at the conference to treat the two countries' resources as a common pool to be distributed according to the strategic need. This meant in in the immediate sense that Britain was promised 10,382 aircraft from American production in 1942, excluding trainers.[2] It meant also in the long-term, through the creation of the Munitions Assignment Board (M.A.B.), the Combined Raw Materials Board (C.R.M.B.) and the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board (C.S.A.B.), that Britain's interests would be represented in Washington. Not all Americans were happy with this: General 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell wrote of a meeting on 11 January:

> (Marshall, Stark, King, Turner, Holcomb, etc., etc., etc.) All agreed on being disgusted with the British hogging <u>all</u> the material: quite willing to divide ours with us, but never any mention of putting <u>theirs</u> into the pot . . . 3

Indeed for the British the benefits of Anglo-American co-operation, as promised at 'Arcadia', were incalculable. In contrast with them the commitment to the Soviet Union, though it involved considerable sacrifices, did not seem excessive.

The Service departments in London, however, were not so certain of this. Remote from the decision-making and sense of purpose in Washington, they succumbed to the bleak reality of disaster, as in almost every theatre of operations in December and January Britain's fortunes deteriorated rapidly. In the Far East the Japanese captured Hong Kong, entered Kuala Lumpur and invaded Wake Island, Borneo and the Celebes. In the Atlantic shipping losses soared as German U-boats capitalized on American inexperience in the waters

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1 Sherwood, <u>The White House papers . . .</u>, pp. 486-7.
2 Craven and Cate, <u>The Army Air Forces . . .</u>, p. 406.
3 T. H. White (ed.), <u>The Stilwell Papers</u> (London, 1948), p. 48. Brackets and emphasis in the original.

of their eastern seaboard.[1] In the Mediterranean the Queen Elizabeth and the Valiant were damaged and the Barnham sunk, reducing the fleet there to three cruisers and a handful of destroyers.[2] In Cyrenaica Rommel recaptured the airfields of the Benghazi-Derna bulge from an over-extended 8th Army and nullified much of what Auchinleck had achieved. Everywhere in Great Britain there was disquiet and dismay at these reverses. In the public sphere this expressed itself in the demand for Churchill to relinquish his position as Minister of Defence and to establish a Ministry of Production. In the Service departments it directed itself against the commitment to the Russians.

The reasons for this are obvious. The Moscow protocol was the most easily defined of Britain's commitments and the most illogical militarily, given the radical changes in the strategic situation. The Red Army's position was much improved with its recent successes in the winter, while Britain's was much worse. In aircraft alone the position had been revolutionized by the Japanese entry into the war and by Hitler's decision in December to establish a new command in southern Italy under Field-Marshal Kesselring and to almost double the number of aircraft there.[3] According to Air Ministry estimates in early January 1942 the Soviet Air Force of 3,400 aircraft now faced only 1,500 German 'planes, while in the Far East the British and Dutch air forces were outnumbered nine to one. On the Western front and in the Mediterranean meanwhile they had only 3,800 aircraft against a combined Axis force of 3,100.[4] As for tanks, on Stalin's own admission to Eden in December, production in the Soviet Union was larger than before the outbreak of war. Indeed, Stalin had said, 'In general the equipment situation did not cause any anxiety.'[5] The protocol included an escape clause intended to apply to just this situation:

> In the event of the war situation changing (it stated) and the burden of defence being transferred to other theatres of war, it will be necessary for the three countries concerned to consult together, and to decide what adjustment of the present arrangement is necessary.[6]

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1 S. E. Morison, The History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol. I (London, 1948), pp. 200-1.
2 Gwyer, p. 244.
3 Ibid.
4 Draft telegram from SOS to Beaverbrook, c. 6 Jan. 1942, AIR 8/930.
5 WO report, Conversations at Moscow conference, FO 371 29472 N7452/3/38.
6 BAR(41)11A, 13 Oct. 1941, CAB 99/7.

To certain officials in the Air Ministry and War Office, it now seemed high time to bring this clause into effect.

Obviously, though, in view of the consensus at 'Arcadia', their attempts to do this were futile. On 4 January instructions came from Churchill that shipments to the Soviet Union were to continue throughout January and that December's backlog must be despatched by the end of the month as well.[1] Added to this were Beaverbrook's emphatic instructions:

> It is not possible to give an elastic interpretation to the terms of the pledge (to the Russians). We must not juggle with the terms of the agreement. We must carry it out.[2]

The Secretary of State for Air therefore eliminated from the telegram drafted for him by his department the suggestion that the protocol be revised, and instead promised that his subordinates would do their best to meet the Russian commitment in January.[3] In fact this meant further shipments of Hurricanes and further deprivation of Fighter Command, since the Russians would not accept Mustangs and only thirty-five Airacobras were fit to send.[4] But the Air Ministry deferred its objections[5] for, as Portal cabled from Washington, 'any proposal to cut the monthly allotments for Russia will not succeed in present atmosphere.'[6]

The War Office met the same reaction when, under pressure from the Australian government, it tried to revise the protocol later in the month. Owing to the diversion of U.S. tanks to the Soviet Union and of aircraft to other theatres, the Australians faced the threat of invasion with forty-three aircraft - Hudsons, Catalinas and Wirraways![7] - and 'practically no tanks' at all.[8] Their Prime Minister complained bitterly on 26 January at this and at Australia's exclusion from decision-making in the past:

> We understand that in past requirements for Australia were treated as of less importance than those for theatres of active operations and that priority was accorded to orders far more recent than our own resulting in diversion of tanks intended for Australia. . . . We strongly contend that grave situation in the Pacific and improvement in Russian position affords grounds for a complete review of distribution of allied pool of tanks. A distribution determined in one state of emergency should not be allowed to prevail when

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1 ASE(42)8, 6 Jan. 1942, CAB 92/3.
2 ASE(42)1, annex 1, 4 Jan. 1942, CAB 92/3.
3 SOS to BB, TAUT no. 406, 7 Jan. 1942, AIR 8/930. See same file for proposed draft telegram.
4 Freeman to Portal, 13 Jan. 1942, AIR 8/930.
5 Mtg on Fighter resources in Air Ministry, 6 Jan. 1942, AIR 20/3096.
6 Portal to Freeman, CAESAR ARCADIA 873, 12 Jan. 1942, AIR 8/930.
7 Australian PM to PM, JOHCU no. 22, 27 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 150/5.
8 High Commissioner for Australia, Bruce, to Beaverbrook, 21 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 150/4.

the situation has completely changed.[1]

Rather than continue supplying the Russians with munitions, the Australians suggested that Britain recognize Soviet claims to their 1940 frontiers, as well as their right to an outlet to the Indian ocean through Iran and their territorial interest in areas of the Far East like north Korea. This was the way, the Australians believed, to 'bargain frankly for immediate Russian support against Japan'.[2]

The C.I.G.S., Brooke, supported the Australians, at least in their claims for armaments. As Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces in 1941 he had opposed the continual drain in tanks imposed by the protocol,[3] and on his colleagues' return from 'Arcadia' in January 1942 suggested amendments to it. He presented a plan on 30 January whereby Australia would receive 141 Matildas and India and New Zealand 70 and 72 Valentines respectively if the Soviet Union received 283 tanks less than the protocol stipulated over the next two months.

> The general strategical situation has changed entirely since the signature of the Russian Protocol, (Brooke argued) and urgent requirements of the Far East cannot be met from British production. Nor can we expect additional allotments of tanks from American sources during the next three months.
> . . .
> In my opinion the time has come when the Russians should be told frankly that we are unable to continue to supply the full number of tanks without running the gravest risks in other vital theatres of war.[4]

Predictably the Defence Committee did not agree. Churchill for one had no sympathy for Curtin who had ignored Australia's connection with Britain by appealing to the United States for help in an article in the Melbourne Herald on 27 December.[5] 'Curtin is in a panic and does not speak for Australia', Churchill declared,[6] and the Chiefs of Staff agreed that the danger to Australia was not imminent. They expected at the end of January that the Japanese would continue collecting islands rather than invade the continent of Australia,[7] and if they did not, Australia's security

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1 DO(42)8, 29 Jan. 1942 (telegram dated 26 Jan.), PREM 3 150/4.
2 Australia (Govt.) to Defence Committee, no. 819, 22 Dec. 1941, PREM 3 394/2.
3 Memorandum on Home Defence, 31 Oct. 1941, WO 193/580.
4 COS(42)55, 26 Jan. 1942, WO 193/539.
5 Gwyer, p. 367.
6 Exchange on Russia between Eden and PM, n.d., BB papers, box 19/3.
7 COS to Joint Staff Mission (JSM), no. (W) 20, 28 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 150/3.

rested with the Americans, who had declared at 'Arcadia' that they would base 36,000 troops there.[1]

Apart from this, on the political level Eden and Beaverbrook argued that it would be wrong to approach the Russians 'just when things were going so well'.[2] It might tempt them, the Foreign Office feared, to make a peace with Hitler, particularly if the Red Army's winter offensive drove the Wehrmacht back to the 1940 border.[3] Even though the Kremlin had signed the United Nations Declaration earlier in January, declaring that they would not make a separate peace,[4] the British had to set against this the failure at the same time of discussions for combined operations, this time against Petsamo.[5] As well, Eden had failed to reach agreement with Stalin at his conference in Moscow on questions of post-war boundaries,[6] and the British were loath to make concessions on these as the Australians wished. American opposition to any modification of the Western position would be extreme, for as their ambassador had explained to Eden before he left for Moscow, they

> took the position that the test of our good faith with regard to the Soviet Union should not be our willingness to agree to the recognition of extended Soviet frontiers at this time, but rather the degree of determination which we show loyally to carry out our promises of aid to the Soviet Government with equipment and supplies.7

The protocol was therefore a gage of Allied goodwill again and Britain's allocation of tanks to the Russians in February and March remained at five hundred. In fact, even with this allocation it was found possible to maintain the Australian and the Middle East allocations at the levels Brooke proposed, but the Home Forces were further deprived, India given 88 fewer tanks than hoped and all three countries, India, Australia and New Zealand, promised only enough to meet 50 per cent of their requirements by the end of March.[8] What is more, while Russian aircraft allocations were also maintained, Australia received only half of the 250 fighters

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1 D. McCarthy, Australia in the War of 1939-1945, series 1, vol. V, p. 15.
2 DO(42)5th mtg, 30 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 150/4.
3 Cadogan minute, 7 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32905 N885/30/38.
4 Woodward, II, pp. 210 ff.
5 COS(42) 3rd mtg, min. 4, 3 Jan. 1942, WO 106/3269.
6 Woodward, pp. 220-36.
7 C. Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, vol. II (London, 1948), p. 1168.
8 DO(42)11 and annex, 31 Jan. 1942, CAB 69/4.

she requested from Britain[1] and was forced to rely on diversions of U.S. forces to the south.

With this decision the priority of the Moscow protocol over all other demands for munitions was effectively assured for the remainder of its life. No matter how pressing the claims of other theatres became, they were not allowed to be satisfied at the Russians' expense. The Chiefs of Staff wished late in February to borrow from Russia's March allocation 72 Hurricanes for the reinforcement of Burma, repaying the Russians over the next three months.[2] The Cabinet ruled: 'there must be no interference with supplies of Hurricanes to Russia.'[3] The Commander-in-Chief, India, asked on 28 April for twenty Bostons in Karachi en route to the Soviet Union to be diverted to the defence of India.[4] 'Regret your proposal impracticable since it is inconceivable that British, US and Russian Governments would agree . . .' replied the Air Ministry.[5] The Secretary of State for Air despaired of finding the aircraft for protocol commitments in May and June. He recommended to the A.S.E. that the Russians be asked to accept smaller quotas,[6] but was ordered in answer to meet the Russian commitment in full,[7] reducing further allotments of Hurricanes to Fighter and Bomber Command.[8] Throughout these months the principle was established that the protocol must be maintained, and maintained it was, in many cases with gratuitous generosity.

Aluminium shipments, for instance, were kept well ahead of schedule and the full nine months' commitment was shipped by the end of March.[9] An extra hundred tanks were promised from June and July production,[10] and Russian requests for a tank with a more effective gun than the two-pounder were met by shipments of the six-pounder Churchill from May onwards.[11] Supplies of aircraft, after the short fall in the New Year, were punctually fulfilled, and on two occasions actually kept ahead of schedule.[12] Hurricanes with cannon

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1 Australia (PM) to PM, JOHCU no. 21, 24 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 150/3; DO to Australia (Govt), no. 138, 31 Jan. 1942, PREM 3 150/5.
2 COS(42)48(O), 23 Feb. 1942, CAB 80/61.
3 WM(42)24th concl., min. 1, 25 Feb. 1942, CAB 65/25.
4 C-in-C India to Air Ministry, 10320/C, 28 April 1942, AIR 8/685.
5 Air Ministry OZ 107, 29 April 1942, ibid.
6 WP(42)181, 29 April 1942, AIR 19/290.
7 DO(42)13th mtg, min. 2, 29 April 1942, CAB 69/4.
8 CAS note for COS approved by Sinclair, 5 May 1942, AIR 19/290.
9 WP(42)417, 17 Sept. 1942, CAB 66/28.
10 ASE(42)13th mtg, min. 1, 12 June 1942, CAB 92/2.
11 WP(42)417, loc. cit.
12 ASE(42)172, MT 59/551.

were shipped at a rate of fifty a month after May,[1] and three thousand lorries, and extra-protocol commitment, were all despatched, despite the initial shipping problems, by the end of March.[2]

There were failures and exceptions to this rule, of course. Some naval supplies, like Asdic sets, were not provided in the promised quantities,[3] while raw materials from territories lost to the Japanese, rubber and tin in particular, could not be supplied at full rates in the later months of the protocol.[4] Extra-protocol requests were not automatically approved: field artillery tractors, motor-cycle combinations and Lysander aircraft, to name but a few, were not provided on request.[5] In spare parts and ammunition too the British disappointed the Russians. Well into 1942 they wrangled with the Americans over who was responsible for 'spares' for American aircraft provided on Britain's account.[6] At the same time they were slow to provide spare parts on the scales which the Russians said they needed. The original rates of October 1941 - three months supply for each tank[7] and one month for each Hurricane[8] - were, even the British admitted, scarcely adequate[9] - particularly as the Far East was given priority in Hurricane spares after Pearl Harbor.[10] Consequently in February 1942 the War Office bowed to Russian pressure and increased the scale of tank spare parts to six months' supply per tank with four months' supply every four months thereafter.[11] The Air Ministry also agreed to new scales in March for the aircraft which the Russians insisted were grounded in the Soviet Union for lack of spare parts.[12] In both instances the cost to Britain was considerable and involved, in the case of aircraft spares, actually breaking down new Hurricanes.[13]

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1 Air Mission's War Diary entry for 11 May 1942, AIR 2/7861.
2 WP(42)417, loc. cit.
3 Ibid.
4 ASE(42)172, loc. cit.
5 WP(42)417, loc. cit.
6 30 MM to AM, AIR 313, 18 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32933 N1006/178/38; Leighton and Coakley, p. 554; for detailed account see Lukas, pp. 134 ff.
7 DO(41)67th mtg, min. 2, 20 Oct. 1941, CAB 69/2.
8 ASE(42)42, 5 Feb. 1942, CAB 92/3.
9 Minute for ACIGS, 23 Jan. 1942, WO 32/10518.
10 ASE(42) 7th mtg, min. 5, 13 March 1942, CAB 92/2.
11 WO to 30 MM, 70880, 14 Feb. 1942, and 75879, 13 Mar. 1942, WO 32/10518.
12 ASE(42) 7th mtg, loc. cit.
13 ASE(42)95, 31 Mar. 1942, CAB 92/3.

Nonetheless in May 1942 the Russians increased their demands further and asked for tank spare parts at rates three times the British scale for Matildas and four times that for Valentines.[1] Aircraft spares they also demanded in increased quantities because, it seemed, they insisted on treating all planes as initial equipment, put none into reserve and made no allowance for wastage.[2] The British simply could not provide spare parts in the quantities now demanded even when they accepted, as they did with considerable reservations in view of the Russian failure to consult British officers in the Soviet Union,[3] that the fighting on the Eastern front justified them.[4] The War Office had to reject 9 of the 123 requests for tank spares outright and a further 17 it could provide only if deliveries of Valentine spare parts from the United States were more reliable than in the past.[5] The Air Ministry meanwhile accepted the Russians' scales early in July but had to exclude from these the aircraft provided between March and June which the Russians wished to include.[6] Lyttelton thought this was merely the Air Ministry being 'adamant in their lack of sympathy for all things Russian',[7] but in fact the new scales did involve a cutback in production of some sixty new Hurricanes. Even then the A.S.E. was forced to admit when reviewing the first protocol: 'It is no exaggeration to say that spares have been the most unsatisfactory feature of our supply of military equipment sent to the U.S.S.R.'[8]

Failures like this, however, could not obscure the fact that in general the British scrupulously maintained their commitments to the Soviet Union in the first six months of 1942. In fact, if anything, the spare parts negotiations demonstrated this, for in them the British accepted unsubstantiated and possibly exaggerated claims from the Russians at further cost to themselves. In doing this they showed that they accepted that, whatever the irrationality of some parts of the protocol, as a whole it was justi-

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1 ASE(42)123, 5 May 1942, CAB 92/4.
2 ASE(42) 11th mtg, min. 8, 11 May 1942, CAB 92/2; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 10 Feb. 1942, BB papers, box 19/6.
3 This was a long story of frustration for the British, perhaps best summarized in Sinclair's letter to Beaverbrook on 10 February, 1942, ibid.
4 Letter Macready to Layton, 22 May 1942, WO 32/10518.
5 ASE(42)131, 24 May 1942, CAB 92/4.
6 ASE(42)155, 5 July 1942, CAB 92/4.
7 Letter Lyttelton to Eden, 9 July 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/13.
8 ASE(42)172, loc. cit.

fied by political and military events in early 1942.

For increasingly British planning in both military and political spheres centred on the Soviet Union. From January onwards the political scene was dominated by efforts to secure a treaty with the Soviet Union without antagonizing the United States by recognizing Soviet claims to the Baltic states. In this delicate situation the protocol had an important diplomatic role to play, as Eden later recalled:

> The manner in which we fulfilled our obligations . . . undoubtedly impressed the Soviet Government and has had the important political effect of helping to convince them of the sincerity of our desire for collaboration.[1]

Militarily too, the Russian effort, of which the protocol was part, gained increasing prominence in British thinking. At the time of the 'Arcadia' conference the Chiefs of Staff had admitted that they regarded the continuation of Russian resistance as 'of primary importance to the Associated Powers in their strategy for the defeat of Germany.' They rated giving all possible assistance to Russia as one of the four major ways, together with blockade, bombing and subversion, of wearing down the German forces in 1942.[2] Nothing that happened in the six months after 'Arcadia' altered this judgement. On the contrary the indecisive end to 'Crusader', Auchinleck's offensive in the desert, the strengthening of Rommel's forces in Libya and the drain of forces to the Far East made it essential that the Russians should be sustained. Not only was there the hope that the Red Army would one day enter the war against Japan,[3] but the whole northern flank of the Middle Eastern theatre depended on the Russians' holding the Germans' summer attack. As the Joint Planners stressed to the Chiefs of Staff when reporting on the situation in the Middle East and India in April: 'We are already committed to gambling on the success of Russian resistance. We must do all in our power to help it.'[4]

Such was Allied weakness, however, that they could not help the Russians in 1942 by invading the continent of Europe.[5] Nor could

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1 WP(42)417, 17 Sept. 1942, CAB 66/28.
2 CR(JP)6, 16 Dec. 1941, CAB 99/17.
3 Although it had been agreed at 'Arcadia' that, since it was better for Russia not to act against Japan until she was strong enough to do so effectively, it would be unwise to press the Russian government on this point. (COS(42)79, CAB 80/34).
4 JP(42)348, 3 April 1942, CAB 84/44.
5 For full discussion of the failure of plans to invade Europe see J. R. M. Butler, Grand Strategy, vol. III (pt. II), June 1941-August 1942, (London: HMSO, 1964), chapters XXIV and XXVII.

they, in view of Auchinleck's insistence that his armoured forces were inadequate, renew their offensive against Rommel in the early part of the year.[1] Their blockade of Germany meanwhile offered meagre support to the Russians being 'little more than bluff' thanks to the strain on the Royal Navy and the leakage through unoccupied France.[2] Raids on the enemy coastline also had minimal impact, spectacular and effective though they were within their own objectives.[3] The British could, and did, support the Russians with their bombing offensive over Germany, which after 14 February 1942 aimed specifically at breaking civilian morale.[4] This, the Air Ministry said in June, diverted one third of the German bomber force and half its fighter force from the Eastern front;[5] and though this claim was later shown to be exaggerated,[6] the bombing campaign undoubtedly assisted and impressed the Russians with the scale of operations such as the thousand-bomber raid on Cologne in May.[7] But apart from this, there were only supplies to the British credit, and scant therefore was the attention paid to those who suggested reducing them - particularly as public opinion was so overwhelmingly in favour of supporting the Soviet Union.

1942 was the high-water mark of public enthusiasm for a second front in support of the Russians. Maisky, two years earlier 'the oily old dodger',[8] was welcomed into the Athenaeum club.[9] Communist party membership rose 25,000 in the first two months of the year,[10] and by April fifty-six Anglo-Soviet societies had sprung up in London alone.[11] By the end of the year Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund had raised £2,250,000.[12] Agitation for a second front grew to a crescendo in the spring under the solicitous attention of Beaverbrook and the Daily Express. Fifty-three thousand people

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1 Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, vol. III, pp. 197-204.
2 Admiralty, October 1942, quoted in Butler, p. 510.
3 Ibid., p. 516.
4 Webster and Frankland, The Strategic Air Offensive, vol. 1, p.323.
5 WM(42)73rd concl., appendix, 11 June 1942, CAB 65/30.
6 Webster and Frankland analyse the success of the attempt to draw the Luftwaffe from the Eastern front (p. 490). They conclude that although the Air Ministry's claims were unsubstantiated, there was in fact some relief afforded the Russians, as the number of day and night fighters of the Luftwaffe in the West increased throughout 1942.
7 Woodward, II, p. 273; A. Werth, The Year of Stalingrad (London, 1946), p. 67; telegram for DMO, MIL 4861, 4 June 1942, WO 193/645A.
8 Dalton, The Fateful Years, p. 257.
9 Werth, The Year of Stalingrad, p. 2.
10 A. Calder, The People's War: Britain, 1939-45 (London, 1969), p. 298.
11 WP(42)142, 3 Apr. 1942, CAB 66/23.
12 A. V. Alexander papers, AVAR 12/98, 20 Feb. 1943.

attended the second-front meeting in Trafalgar Square on 29 March, and 50,000 the one in May. The Hippodrome housed 1,400 on 24 May when Michael Foot of the Evening Standard and John Gordon of the Sunday Express supported the Daily Express's call for immediate action in Europe.[1] In this context supplies of munitions seemed scarcely enough; as the Times wrote on 7 March:

> On the part of Great Britain there cannot be a moment's hesitation in meeting this demand (for a constant flow of supplies), whatever competing claims there may be on the output of British factories and the capacity of British shipping. . . . What is sent to Russia in the coming weeks may yet prove a determining factor in the summer campaign.

The House of Commons, the forum for which Churchill had the most respect, naturally reflected this wave of public sentiment. Only the occasional member of Parliament questioned the flow of munitions to the Soviet Union and most members urged for greater sacrifices to increase it. Even in the long debates on the war situation in January and February, which culminated in a vote of confidence in Churchill's leadership, the protocol was accepted as a sound use of Britain's resources - and this despite Churchill's[2] and Attlee's[3] assurances that the reverses in the Far East were in part attributable to it. The member for Wycombe, Major-General Sir Alfred Knox, was not representative of the House when he said on 25 February:

> I should like to know from a military expert whether we could not have sent half of those planes - which amounted to so much from our own point of view, and must have been but a drop in the bucket for Russia, which has so enormous a front - to Russia, and given the other half to our own people in the Far East and in the Middle East. I realize that we had to help Russia, and that they are doing splendidly, but it seems a frightful thing to let our own people down for want of the necessary protection.[4]

To most members of Parliament in February 1942 the issue was not whether Soviet demands were impeding British operations, but whether the leadership of Churchill's government was doing so.[5]

The effect of this public agitation in support of the Soviet Union was not great enough to force the Cabinet into a premature

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1 Coates, History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, pp. 706, 712.
2 Parliamentary Debates, vol. 377, col. 606, 27 Jan. 1942, and col. 1011, 29 Jan. 1942.
3 Ibid., col. 90, 8 Jan. 1942.
4 Ibid., vol. 378, col. 258-9.
5 For full debate see Parliamentary Debates, volumes 377 and 378.

invasion of the Continent. In fact the Anglo-American discussions on the second front were conducted almost entirely without reference to it, and there was evidence in the Home Intelligence reports that sections of the public thought this should be so.[1] Nonetheless the agitation did provide a climate of opinion in which it was unthinkable to reduce the flow of supplies to the Red Army and in which supplies continued to compensate for Britain's military inactivity. As Balfour said when the Air Ministry was considering defaulting on aircraft allocations in May and June:

> Politically in this country it will be difficult to explain. There is the second front cry, and we cannot defend our action by supporting figures of available production in relation to the priority calls of other theatres of war.[2]

Lyttelton too, as Minister of Production, was persuaded by this argument to recommend an increase in Britain's commitment after the Moscow protocol had expired. Britain, as he saw it, had two choices in 1942: to invade the Continent or provide supplies. The latter seemed more politic, particularly as 'Any slackening in our aid to Russia would impair the keenness of workers in this country.'[3]

It is the irony of the commitment to the Soviet Union that while this consensus on its necessity grew in the first half of 1942, so also did the obstacles in the way of putting it into effect. All the potential difficulties of the supply routes to the Soviet Union in 1941 intensified in 1942, with the result that while professional objections to the allocation of munitions were silenced, protests about the risks of delivering them became louder.

Admittedly the Persian Gulf route saw considerable progress over these months once the Russians had lifted the restrictions they had placed on the route in December. Roosevelt declared Iran eligible for Lend-Lease aid on 10 March,[4] and by April the Persian transportation facilities had more than trebled compared with September 1941.[5] The railway's capacity meanwhile had risen by August 1942 from 200 tons a day to 1,500 tons[6] of which 661 tons a day was for the Russians.[7] However, these figures fell 25 per cent short of

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1 HIWR, no. 83, 27 Apr. - 4 May 1942, HIWR, no. 86, 18 - 26 May 1942, INFO 1/292B.
2 Minute Balfour to SOS, 24 Apr. 1942, AIR 19/290.
3 WP(42)178, 26 Apr. 1942, CAB 66/24.
4 Motter, The Persian Corridor, p. 156.
5 ASE(42)114, 26 Apr. 1942, CAB 92/4.
6 Motter, p. 348.
7 Ibid., p. 331.

target[1] and in individual projects too there was a recurring backlog. In December 1941 it was agreed that aircraft from the United States would be erected at the British base at Abadan,[2] and by a similar arrangement in January 1942 2,000 U.S. lorries a month were to be assembled at Andimeshk.[3] But the problems of 1941 - lack of skilled workmen and slow delivery from the United States[4] - retarded these plans. The first Douglas aircraft, for instance, arrived on 23 January, but Douglas equipment and employees did not arrive until May.[5] Likewise the Andimeshk plant did not start operations until 30 April.[6] In the interim the British assisted the Americans by converting Boston light bombers in their holdings at Shu'aiba to Russian specifications,[7] and by assembling 1,554 lorries at Bushire, some 1,204 of them for the Russians.[8] But even these operations were impeded, this time by international dissension. The Russians suspected the U.K.C.C., which operated the Bushire plant, of profiteering and seeking a monopoly of transport in Iran. As well they thought the Bushire-Tabriz route too difficult.[9] The British for their part suspected the Russians of political ambitions in Iran[10] and resented the introduction of Russian mechanics and lorry drivers into their zone.[11] They were also disturbed by the Russians' insistence that responsibility for the railway should be divided at Qūm, equidistant between Soviet and British zones, rather than at Teheran, the natural breaking point.[12] By May Auchinleck felt obliged to send a telegram to Lieut-General Quinan of the 10th Army, saying:

> I wonder whether all officers really do appreciate the importance of concentrating on the business in hand - the

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1 ASE(42)114, loc. cit.
2 Motter, p. 128.
3 Ibid., p. 143; Memo by Deputy Quarter-Master in HQ 10th Army, 13 Feb. 1942, WO 201/1390.
4 CSAB London/MWT to CSAB Washington, MAST 14188 SABLO 7, 10 May 1942, MT 59/79.
5 Lukas, p. 189.
6 FO to Washington, no. 17 LONUS SAVING, 1 Aug. 1942, MT 59/79.
7 Motter, p. 128.
8 260 were for UKCC use and 90 for the Poles.(no. 17 LONUS SAVING, loc. cit.)
9 Motter, p. 147.
10 C-in-C India to WO, VVY/1057, 17 Jan. 1942, WO 193/159; see also Sir Claremont Skrine (Consul-General at Meshed), World War in Iran (London, 1962).
11 Motter, p. 144; Lukas, p. 194.
12 FO to Charge d'affaires, Kuibyshev, no. 22, 10 Feb. 1942, and Teheran to FO, no. 58, 15 Feb. 1942, FO 181/970.

> defeat of Germany.
>
> Most officers are to some extent politically minded in regard to Russia but whatever their apprehensions for the future it is essential that their private views should be subordinated to the main task. Our help to Russia . . . must be unstinting and ungrudged.[1]

These difficulties were largely eliminated by August 1942 through the good offices of the Americans,[2] but together with the lag in the development projects and the time taken in extensive Russian inspections of supplies,[3] they had ensured a backlog by the end of June of 100 aircraft and 526 lorries[4] - and this at a time when the delivery of lorries to the Persian Gulf had been raised by 50 per cent during Molotov's visit to Washington[5] and when the crisis in the northern convoys was threatening to flood the Persian Gulf with supplies.

For it was the northern supply route that posed the more serious problems in the spring of 1942 to the implementation of the protocol. Many of the dire expectations of the British about this route were fulfilled when the winter of 1941-2 proved to be the worst for fifteen years and the ice at Archangel was exceptionally thick.[6] The port was effectively closed to all incoming traffic until late March when on 15 January the Luftwaffe damaged the icebreaker Stalin.[7] (The Montcalm was still in Canada after a dismaying series of false starts.)[8] The ability of Murmansk to take all of Archangel's traffic was therefore the first concern of the Chiefs of Staff in February. They saw their scepticism about Russian estimates for Archangel justified, and the C.I.G.S. warned the Ministry of War Transport on 27 February about the dangers of 'a hard and fast determination to ship everything within the month regardless of the consequences'.

> We ourselves are desperately in need of more ships for the reinforcement and maintenance of our forces overseas and could make good use of the valuable material locked up in these idle ships (awaiting berth at Murmansk).

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1 Auchinleck to Quinan, DO/PSC/25, 9 May 1942, WO 201/1314.
2 Motter, p. 131.
3 Lukas, pp. 191-3.
4 Motter, pp. 135, 148.
5 Ibid., p. 149.
6 Maisky to Llewellin, 11 Feb. 1942, BB papers, BBK D/82, file 24/D6.
7 Signal from SBNO, Archangel, no. 2215A, 27 Jan. 1942, BB papers, BBK D/170. There was known to be another Russian icebreaker, Litke, apart from the Lenin in Archangel.
8 Donaldson to Beaverbrook, 18 Feb. 1942, and attached memorandum, BB papers, box 19/11.

> It is not suggested that we should reduce our releases to Russia, or go back on our promises as regards the totals to be sent . . .[1]

But privately Brooke wrote: 'Personally I consider it absolute madness. We have never even asked Russia to inform us of the real urgency of these reinforcements.'[2]

In fact Murmansk showed an unexpected capacity for handling shipping, thanks to Russian improvisation, and the congestion Brooke feared did not develop.[3] Nonetheless there remained the problematical shortage of shipping. Between August 1941 and February 1942 the British provided 535,863 tons of shipping for the north Russia-United Kingdom route and 65,157 tons for the north Russia-U.S.A. route.[4] In March, despite the fact that the convoy cycle was lengthened to fifteen days[5] and the Russians were making a limited contribution towards the provision of shipping,[6] the British were providing 100,000 tons to supplement the 360,000 tons of American shipping on the protocol run.[7] They gained little compensation for this in precise shipping terms, for on 27 March the Russians rejected finally the idea of a shuttle service between the U.S.A. and Britain of Russian ships not suitable for the carriage of tanks and aircraft. All such ships, the Russians claimed, were needed for coastal work in north Russia or were already operating in the Atlantic.[8] At the same time the supply of return cargoes from north Russia, which could have relieved Britain's import position,[9] declined. The most reliable cargo, timber, was available only at Archangel, and the difficulties of winter transport to Murmansk reduced the originally 'considerable' flow of items like chrome and magnesite to a trickle.[10] At the end of January Mikoyan gave Cripps a list of supplies which he undertook to make available by the end of March,[11] but for understandable reasons the supply proved irregular. Since the whole future of

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1 COS(42)137, 26 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32984 N1236/1214/38.
2 Bryant, The Turn of the Tide, p. 376.
3 MWT telegram, MAST 12783 MASTA 1977 MOSSY, 23 Apr. 1942, MT 63/237.
4 Note by Leathers on shipping, BB papers, BBK D/82, file 24/D6.
5 MT 59/551, ASE(42)172, n.d.
6 Anglo-Soviet Shipping Committee sub-committee report on Programmes and Tonnage, February 1942, 5 Mar. 1942, MT 59/548. For British supplies 9 British and 1 Russian ships were allocated.
7 MWT memorandum, 9 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32863 N1558/1/38.
8 UK-S(Sh)42 10th minutes, item 1, 27 Mar. 1942, MT 59/1801.
9 ASE(42)102, 7 Apr. 1942, CAB 92/3.
10 ASE(42)172, n.d., MT 59/551.
11 ASE(42)43, 8 Feb. 1942, CAB 92/3.

the convoys was soon in doubt the British did not press the Russians unduly,[1] and consequently cargoes were provided for only 30 per cent of the ships leaving north Russia.[2] The list of return cargoes which had been agreed upon at the Moscow conference was in no way fulfilled.[3]

Serious though this was, in view of the fact that British shipping losses in the first quarter of 1942 were twice those of the last quarter of 1941,[4] it nonetheless did not pose the real threat to the northern convoys. This emerged in the concentration of enemy surface forces in northern Norway late in February. On 14-15 January, the battleship Tirpitz moved to Trondheim, followed in later months by the pocket battleships, the Lützow and the Admiral Scheer, the heavy cruiser, the Admiral Hipper and a force of modern destroyers.[5] Over the same period the German High Command strengthened its air and submarine forces in northern Norway making the Allied convoys vulnerable to four forms of attack: heavy ships, light surface forces, U-boats and land-based aircraft. To meet such threats the British, who were responsible for providing escorts, had to mount a major fleet operation west of Bear Island and persuade the Russians to provide intensive naval and air protection east of that point.

This the Russians consistently failed to do, at least on a scale which satisfied the Admiralty. Whether this was from lack of resources, lack of skill or lack of inclination, it is difficult to say. The naval historian, Roskill, believes that 'within the limits imposed by their somewhat primitive conceptions of maritime war' the Russians probably did what they could.[6] But the Senior British Naval Officer in north Russia at the time thought that the Kremlin, as distinct from the Soviet Navy, took the attitude that 'These convoys are your only contribution. If you want them protected send along the aircraft'.[7] Certainly a case can be made that the Soviet Navy simply did not possess, or was not allocated, the necessary resources. It was undoubtedly the inferior service in the Soviet Union and very much the poor relation when it came

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1 WP(42)417, 17 Sept. 1942, CAB 66/28.
2 ASE(42)102, 7 Apr. 1942, CAB 92/3.
3 See table F, WP(42)417, loc. cit.
4 Behrens, Merchant Shipping . . ., p. 263.
5 Morison, p. 161.
6 S. W. Roskill, The War at Sea, vol. II (London, HMSO, 1956), p. 128.
7 Letter from SBNO, North Russia, to DNI, 21 May 1942, ADM 205/21.

THE ARCTIC CONVOY ROUTES 1941-1942
and Approaches to Murmansk and Archangel

Sea routes (approx.) Summer — — — Winter ———
Air base Allied △ Enemy ■
Approx. limits of Allied air support – – – – – –
Approx. limits of Enemy air striking force ···· ···· ····

GREENLAND
ICELAND
Reykjavik
Jan Mayen I.
SPITZBERGEN
South Cape
Hope I.
Bear I.
Mean position of sea ice mid-March
Mean position of sea ice mid-September
CATALINAS FROM REYKJAVIK
CATALINAS FROM SULLOM VOE
ARCTIC CIRCLE
Faeroe Is.
Sullom Voë
Shetland Is.
Orkney Is.
U.K.
Bergen
Trondheim
Bodo
Narvik
Bardufoss
Tromso
Banak
North Cape
Altenfiord
Andfiord
Kirkenes
Petsamo
Varangerfiord
Polyarnoe
Murmansk
Vaenga
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
U.S.S.R.
White Sea
Ekonomiya
Archangel
Bakaritsa
Molotovsk
75°
70°
60°
20°
10°
0°
10°
20°
30°
40°

to claiming aircraft from the Red Army.[1] The Soviet Chief of Naval Staff admitted, when Admiral Miles, head of the naval mission in Moscow, requested greater air support in February, that there were no long-range fighters available for convoy duty.[2] Prior to this in fact he had appealed unofficially for Beaufighters and Mosquitoes from the British, and a flotilla of American destroyers to assist in the protection east of the meridian 28° East that the Allies demanded.[3] Both these requests were turned down, however - the British committing themselves only to providing long-range Hurricane sets[4] - and the Russians therefore agreed to send twenty PE.2B bombers, 30 Hurricanes[5] and a further twenty of their relatively new long-range fighter, the PE.3, to north Russia. The British did not think this number of aircraft adequate to give protection throughout the long daylight hours their convoys now faced,[6] but had to rest content with Admiral Kutnezov's assurances on 2 March that the Northern Fleet was making the defence of convoys its primary task.[7]

The situation did not improve, however. Although Russian surface patrols were more active[8] and the Russian Naval Air Force was reported as 'doing well - active and ready to help according to their ability', on the negative side the Senior British Naval Officer observed:

> if you study recent reports, there is more bombing of enemy positions and aerodrommes, more reconnaissance and more Hurricanes. Over sea they are a bit lost . . . but they do meet HM ships and convoys at about 50 miles, not enough of course.[9]

It was obvious in fact by March that Russian pilots, though able to hold their own over land, were not as competent over sea,[10] and,

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1 Mtg with Naval Otdel (Soviet liaison body) in Moscow, 14 Apr. 1942, AIR 2/7861.
2 Miles and Collier (Head of air mission) to Air Ministry and Admiralty, AIR 3297, 28 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32984 N1214/1214/38.
3 Collier to Vice-CAS, AIR 3039, 14 Feb. 1942, AIR 2/7861; War Diary of British Naval Mission, Moscow, 26 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32899 N2016/23/38.
4 Air Ministry to 30 MM, AX.679, 25 Feb. 1942, AIR 6/618; COS(42) 43rd mtg, min. 11, 3 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32984 N1214/1214/38.
5 30 MM to Admy, AM, 1525/2 March, N1214/1214/38.
6 Eighth monthly report- North Russia, March 1942, FO 371 32899 N2016/23/38.
7 30 MM to Admy, AM, 1525/2 March, loc. cit.
8 Eighth monthly report, loc. cit.
9 Letter SBNO, N Russia, to DNI, 14 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32984 N1945/1214/38.
10 Letter from Polyarnoe to C-in-C, 5 Mar. 1942, ibid.

perhaps in recognition of this, they accepted an offer of Coastal Command officers to assist in the organization of convoy protection.[1] In the meantime, however, convoy losses, which had been negligible over the winter,[2] began to mount. The Tirpitz made a sortie on 6 March during PQ 12, the first convoy to be covered by the main fleet, but this, thanks mainly to bad weather, came to nought.[3] PQ 13 (20-31 March), however, was not so lucky. Scattered by a gale, five ships, one quarter of the total convoy, fell victim to enemy aircraft and destroyers.[4] In the first three weeks of April a further eight ships were lost, five again to enemy aircraft and another three by air attacks on Murmansk.

> This is a rate of loss (the Admiralty concluded) that our merchant navy can hardly afford to sustain. In the light of our shipping casualties in other parts of the world, it is a rate in which we cannot contemplate an increase.[5]

As Pound explained to his colleagues on 4 April, Britain's ability to ship supplies to the Soviet Union had never been given sufficient consideration.[6] Brooke agreed that the 'great military risks involved' were difficult to justify since 'We ourselves urgently required the equipment.'[7]

The Cabinet, however, when warned by the Chiefs of Staff on 13 April of the dangerous situation, was understandably reluctant to do more than make further representations for aid to the Russians.[8] The Admiralty persisted, and on 24 April it was agreed that future convoys should be limited to twenty-five ships each, at a frequency of three convoys every two months.[9] This the Admiralty estimated would allow the carrying of all British and American protocol supplies, providing the American ships waiting to sail from Iceland were unloaded and restowed in Britain.[10] At present only one-fifth of their cargoes were protocol materials,[11] thanks to Soviet demands

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1 30 Mission, Moscow to Admy, AM, AIR 3485, 9 Mar. 1942, AIR 20/4986.
2 Roskill, p. 119.
3 Ibid., pp. 120-4.
4 Ibid., pp. 126-7.
5 Information prepared by Admy for presentation to Maisky, 19 Apr. 1942, ADM 1/12057.
6 COS(42)106th mtg, min. 1, 4 Apr. 1942, CAB 79/20.
7 COS(42)114th mtg, min. 1, 10 Apr. 1942, CAB 79/20.
8 ADM 1/12057, WM(42) 47th concl., 13 Apr. 1942.
9 WM(42)52nd conclusions, min. 5, 24 Apr. 1942, CAB 65/26.
10 Note by Donaldson for Foreign Secretary based on conversation with Pound, 27 Apr. 1942, ADM 205/13.
11 WM(42) 48th concl., min. 4, confidential annex, 14 Apr. 1942, CAB 65/30.

for foodstuffs and other commodities.[1] These must be unloaded if protocol cargo was to make its way to the Soviet Union on schedule.

Both the Russians and the Americans, however, strongly opposed this change. The Russians had been making consistent efforts through February and March to have the rate of convoys increased to three a month. They naturally enough wanted more supplies in the spring in anticipation of the Wehrmacht's summer offensive, even if this meant a reduction of supplies in later months.[2] Instead they found, not only that they were not granted this,[3] but that flow of supplies dropped drastically in April. Only 7 of the 24 ships which sailed on 8 April reached north Russia, since one was sunk and 16 turned back to Iceland after encountering heavy ice.[4] The backlog at Iceland by 25 April was 41 ships and threatened to reach 86 before the next convoy sailed.[5]

This backlog represented much of the U.S. protocol offering to date, which explains the Americans' dismay at the Admiralty's decision to limit convoys; for it was only in April that the Americans had started clearing the backlog in shipments to the Soviet Union which they had accumulated in their own country since October 1941. Before that they had been bedevilled by the problems of finding suitable shipping,[6] by Russian ambiguity about the priority of supplies[7] and by the lack of any central authority like the A.S.E. The President's Soviet Protocol Committee, responsible for co-ordinating all activities, was not formed until 9 November 1942,[8] and in the interim responsibility for loading and shipping supplies was woefully fragmented - procurement and loading programmes were determined by the Soviet Supply Section of the Office of Lend-Lease Administration (O.L.L.A.), stevedoring was controlled by the War Shipping Administration and details of stowage by the inexperienced Soviet commercial organization, Amtorg.[9] The Americans were loath to save shipping space by knocking down bombers as

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1 Notes of weekly reports submitted by Soviet Supply Section of Lend-Lease Administration to Stettinius, 3 Jan. 1942-28 Feb. 1942, FO 32863 N1651/1/38.
2 ASE(42)66, 27 Feb. 1942, CAB 92/3; Maisky-Eden conversation, 23 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32863 N1549/1/38.
3 Letter P. J. Grigg (Minister for War) from Eden, 6 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32933 N1004/178/38; FO 371 32863 N1549/1/38.
4 Roskill, p. 127.
5 Note to Harriman, 25 Apr. 1942, PREM 3 393/2.
6 Leighton and Coakley, p. 556.
7 See p.94 , and Soviet Supply Section report, loc. cit.
8 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1942, III (Washington, 1961), p. 743.
9 Paper by W. O. Hart, Mar. 1942, BB papers, box 19/2.

the British and Harriman advised,[1] and shipping itself was scarce because in practice the Pacific theatre was given precedence, despite the ruling at 'Arcadia'.[2] Supplies flowed to U.S. ports nonetheless and acute congestion developed.[3] This in turn prevented shipment not only of American supplies but many goods, including Canadian tanks, promised to the Russians on Britain's account.[4]

Only in March did the situation start to improve when a new Soviet organization to deal solely with Lend-Lease matters, the Soviet Government Purchasing Commission, took over Amtorg's responsibilities.[5] At the same time the President intervened drastically. Roosevelt was told of the backlog early in March and he declared to Henry Morgenthau, the Secretary for the Treasury:

> I do not want to be in the same position as the English. The English promised the Russians two divisions. They failed. They promised them help in the Caucasus. They failed. Every promise the English have made to the Russians, they have fallen down on . . . The only reason we stand so well with the Russians is that up to date we have kept our promises . . . Nothing could be worse than to have the Russians collapse . . . I would rather lose New Zealand, Australia or anything else than have the Russians collapse.

Authorizing Morgenthau to expedite shipments to the Soviet Union, Roosevelt added, 'This is <u>critical</u> because (a) we <u>must</u> keep our word (b)because Russian resistance counts <u>most</u> today.'[6] On 17 March he gave further instructions that shipping must be provided for the protocol from South American and Caribbean routes 'regardless of other considerations', and under this stimulus April shipments soared. Seventy-nine ships left the United States that month - 63 for the northern route, 6 for the Persian Gulf and 10 for Vladivostock - compared with a total of 24 in January and even less in February.[7] April shipments totalled 450,000 tons whereas in the whole period October 1941 to March

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1 ASE(42)64, 27 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32862 N1132/1/38; and ASE(42) 6th mtg, min. 2, 2 Mar. 1942, N1296/1/38, ibid.
2 Leighton and Coakley, loc. cit.
3 Soviet Supply Section report, loc. cit.
4 Eden to Lyttelton, 20 Apr. 1942, FO 371 32864 N2017/1/38; only 150 of the 596 tanks produced in Canada for the Soviet Union had reached their destination by 30 June 1942.(ASE(42)172, n.d., MT 59/551.)
5 <u>FRUS, 1942</u>, III, p. 696.
6 J. M. Blum, <u>From the Morgenthau diaries, vol. 3, The Years of War, 1941-1945</u> (U.S.A., 1967), pp. 81-2.
7 Leighton and Coakley, p. 556.

1942 only 375,000 tons had been shipped.[1] 'Real effectiveness in getting supplies to the seaboard has been attained,' the O.L.L.A. reported to the President late in April[2]- just when the British announced that the size and frequency of the convoys must be curtailed.

Roosevelt urged Churchill to reconsider this decision. He was dismayed at the political ramifications of the Russians learning that only a few of the 107 ships planned for May would actually sail for north Russia.[3] Moreover, as he told Churchill on 30 April:

> I am very anxious that ships should not be unloaded and reloaded in England, because I believe it would leave an impossible and very disquieting impression in Russia.[4]

He wanted, as the British Admiralty Delegation (B.A.D.) in Washington put it, 'everything possible done to keep the Russians sweet'.[5]

For the British, however, it was a question of their national security, and Churchill answered Roosevelt on 2 May begging him 'not to press us beyond our judgement in this operation'.[6] He was well aware of the political implications of the Admiralty's decisions, for instructions had already been given to the Ministry of Information to keep the news of unloading the cargoes suppressed; furthermore, the dock workers involved were to be told of the reasons for this action.[7] These were, as Churchill explained to Roosevelt, that Britain's naval resources were 'absolutely extended', and that a short convoy cycle could be run only at the risk of disrupting Britain's life-line, the Atlantic convoys.[8] Already two cruisers, the Trinidad and the Edinburgh had been lost during PQ 15 and QP 11, and the battleship King George V had been damaged when it collided with and sank the destroyer Punjabi. Confronted with this, Roosevelt conceded defeat and gave his consent to the reduction of the convoys, with the proviso that they

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1 M. Matloff and E. M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942 (Washington, 1953), p. 206.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 557.
3 Sir Winston Churchill, The Second World War, vol. IV (London, 1951), p. 231.
4 Ibid.
5 BAD Washington to Admy, AIDAC 508, 27 Apr. 1942, FO 371 32984 N2313/1214/38.
6 Churchill, p. 232.
7 WM(42)52nd concl., min. 5, 24 Apr. 1942, FO 371 32984 N2230/1214/38.
8 Churchill, pp. 231-2.

should contain thirty-five ships each if at all possible.[1]

The Admiralty soon had doubts even about this, for Russian air support for the convoys declined in April[2] and threatened to be even less in May. On their own the British were able to control the U-boat threat - by providing anti-submarine protection on three times the Atlantic convoy scale[3] but they were unable to neutralize the Luftwaffe. This was the major threat, for until Arctic ice receded, the convoys would be exposed to heavy air attack for seven days, during which the British could provide only limited fighter and anti-aircraft protection.[4] The Prince of Wales and the Repulse showed what could happen to ships in these circumstances, and Russian assistance was therefore essential: fighters to protect the convoys, long-range bombers to attack German aerodrommes, and anti-aircraft defences for the ports.[5] Yet in April the Naval Otdel had admitted that it would have difficulty in extracting bombers from the Red Army when large-scale operations resumed in the spring.[6] Stalin also, when asked specifically for air and naval support by Churchill on 9 May, replied:

> You may not doubt that on our part all possible measures will be taken. It is necessary however to take into consideration the fact that our naval forces are very limited, and that our air forces in their vast majority are engaged at the battle-front.[7]

In these circumstances the First Sea Lord soon concluded that he could not countenance the sailing of the convoys planned for 18 May (PQ 16) and 3 June (PQ 17). 'The whole thing is a most unsound operation with the dice loaded against us in every direction', he wrote to Admiral King,[8] and he refused to risk in such conditions capital and aircraft carrier units which were vital to Britain's future. Should they be damaged or sunk, Britain could lose control of her communications in the Atlantic or the Indian Ocean, and compared with this Russia's losing the convoys - or even Germany's losing the Tirpitz - was minor.[9] On 17 May, therefore, Pound recommended to the Cabinet that convoys be suspended

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1 Churchill, p. 232.
2 SBNO, N.Russia to Admy, 771, 15 Apr. 1942, AIR 20/4986.
3 Conversation with Pound and Rear-Admiral A. J. Power, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff(Home), 7 May 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/1.
4 Memorandum by First Sea Lord, 16 May 1942, FO 371 32984 N2591/1214/38.
5 Pound-Power conversation, loc. cit.
6 Mtg with Naval Otdel, 14 Apr. 1942, AIR 2/7861.
7 Churchill, p. 233.
8 Roskill, p. 130.
9 Pound to First Lord of the Admiralty, 10 July 1942, ADM 205/14.

until July 1 when ice conditions would allow larger convoys of fifty ships. With Roosevelt's protests fresh in mind, however, the Cabinet refused. There were the practical problems of the strain on Russian ports when the convoys resumed,[1] and, as Churchill explained, 'Failure on our part to make the attempt would weaken our influence with both our major Allies.' Already, it seems, he was fearful of Britain's eclipse by its more powerful allies, and though, as he explained to the Chiefs of Staff, he shared their misgivings, he thought the convoys 'a matter of duty'.[2] PQ 16 must sail and its fate would determine that of PQ 17.[3]

In the event PQ 16 was not the disaster the Admiralty predicted. Only seven of the fifty ships in it and the returning convoy were lost,[4] whereas Churchill had been prepared to tolerate an attrition rate of 50 per cent.[5] German U-boats were unexpectedly quiet,[6] and the Russians, faced with further appeals from both Churchill[7] and Admiral King in Washington,[8] exerted themselves in defence. Warned that the convoys might be suspended if losses were too high,[9] they diverted 194 fighters from the Red Army and provided in addition 59 bombers and 45 flying boats for work in north Russia. A fighter escort met the convoy eleven hours before it reached the Kola Inlet, and German aerodrommes at Banak, Kirkenes and Petsamo were attacked, with mixed success, on that and the two preceding days. Two Russian destroyers accompanied QP 12 to 30° East, and three met PQ 16 at the same point. Five submarines were provided for patrolling the coast and areas further to sea in an effort to deter the Lützow and the Scheer.[10] The Admiralty was not satisfied with the submarine action,[11] but Admiral Miles confessed:

> I think they have really tried quite hard this time and now that they have got more bombers they intend to bomb Tromso, Bardufoss and Hammerfest during the passage of PQ 17.[12]

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1 WM(42) 64th concl., min. 2, confidential annex, 17 May 1942, CAB 65/30; Pound's memorandum is contained in annex to COS(42)152nd mtg, FO 371 32984 N2591/1214/38.
2 Churchill, p. 234.
3 WM(42) 64th concl., min. 2, loc. cit.
4 Roskill, p. 132.
5 DO(42)15th mtg, 13 July 1942, CAB 69/4.
6 Roskill, p. 132.
7 PM to Premier Stalin, T.743/2, 19 May 1942, PREM 3 393/2.
8 Burns, Roosevelt, p. 233.
9 T.743/2, loc. cit.
10 'PQ 16 and QP 12: Russian Co-operation', ADM 205/21.
11 Admy to Miles, 2114B, 7 June 1942, AIR 20/4986.
12 Admiral Miles to Admy, 1719C/3 June, ibid.

In view of this, and the euphoria which prevailed after the signing of the Anglo-Soviet treaty on 26 May, it was unthinkable not to sail the next convoy. Even Molotov had said in his report at the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on 18 June:

> We must, of course, bear in mind that the delivery of armaments and war materials to the Soviet Union was and is a matter of no little difficulty. . . . Nevertheless, the delivery of arms and materials from the U.S.A. and Great Britain has not only not decreased, but has increased in recent months. These supplies are an essential and important supplement to those arms and supplies which the Red Army receives, in their overwhelming bulk, from our internal resources. . . . the fulfilment of these deliveries has played and will play in the future an important part in strengthening friendly relations between the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S.A. [1]

In further recognition of the convoys' value, Stalin accepted on 20 June an offer of six R.A.F. squadrons for convoy defence in north Russia.[2]

Unfortunately PQ 17, which sailed on 27 June, was struck by such catastrophe that all arguments for continuing the convoys were shattered. Only 11 of the 34 ships in the convoy arrived at Archangel after the Admiralty, fearing an attack by the Tirpitz and the Hipper, ordered the convoy to scatter.[3] Of the nine British ships in the convoy only two arrived with a small portion of protocol supplies loaded in Britain - only 53 of 215 aircraft, only 40 of the 245 tanks, 15 of the 144 Bren carriers, 28 of the 80 anti-tank guns, 133 of 200 Bren guns, and 177 of 300 Boys anti-tank rifles. Substantial quantities of ammunition were also lost and urgently needed spare parts for aircraft and tanks.[4] This was disaster on the scale the Chiefs of Staff had dreaded, and they would not guarantee that it, or worse, would not happen again.[5] On 13 July therefore, the Defence Committee, which was faced with shipping losses of 400,000 tons in one week,[6] decided to suspend PQ 18.[7] Roosevelt's agreement to this was reluctantly given, and

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1 Soviet Foreign Policy during the Patriotic War: documents and materials, transl. by A. Rothstein (London, 1946), p. 172.
2 Butler, p. 598.
3 This controversial and disastrous decision has been the subject of numerous books and also of litigation. Roskill's account of the sequence of events and reasons for the Admiralty's decision is in his vol. II, pp. 134-45.
4 ASE(42)167, 1 Aug. 1942, CAB 92/4.
5 COS(42) 203rd mtg, min. 1, 10 July 1942, CAB 79/22.
6 PM to Roosevelt, no. 113, 14 July 1942, AIR 8/933.
7 DO(42) 15th mtg, CAB 69/4.

the news broken to Stalin on 17 July.

> My naval advisers tell me (Churchill telegraphed Stalin) that if they had the handling of the German surface, submarine and air forces, in present circumstances, they would guarantee the complete destruction of any convoy to North Russia. They have not been able so far to hold out any hopes that convoys attempting to make the passage in perpetual daylight would fare better than P.Q.17.

He promised that the British would consider in the autumn both combined operations in northern Norway with the aim of eliminating the threat to the convoys there, and the sending of air forces to the southern Russian front. 'Believe me', he assured Stalin, 'there is nothing that is useful and sensible that we and the Americans will not do to help you in your grand struggle.'[1]

Stalin's reaction was harsh. He accused the British of refusing 'to continue the sending of war materials to the Soviet Union via the Northern route.' He rejected the arguments against the sailing of the convoys and insisted that 'with goodwill and readiness to fulfil the contracted obligations these convoys could be regularly undertaken and heavy losses could be inflicted on the enemy.' He criticized the actual decision to scatter the convoy and protested that supplies through the Persian Gulf could in no way compensate for the cancellation of the convoys. As a final jibe, he attacked the reference in Churchill's telegram to a second front in 1943, emphasizing that the Soviet government could not 'acquiesce in the postponement of a Second Front in Europe until 1943.[2]

As if this telegram, which ignored that Britain had given no undertaking either to ship supplies or to invade the Continent in 1942,[3] were not enough, rumours about PQ 17 began to circulate in London. With little difficulty they were traced to the Soviet embassy,[4] and when Maisky and Admiral Kharmalov were called to consultations with Eden and Pound, they took it upon themselves to criticize the Admiralty's controversial decision. Kharmalov declared that

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1 Churchill, pp. 239-41.
2 Ibid., pp. 241-3. Stalin's irritation was doubtless increased by the fact that less than two weeks before this he had agreed to a temporary diversion of forty light bombers at Basra to the British forces in the Middle East. (FRUS, 1942, III, pp. 606-7; WM(42)85th concl., min. 1, 3 July 1942, CAB 65/27.)
3 See Aide-Memoire for Molotov on continental landings, 10 June 1942, Churchill, p. 305.
4 WM(42)101st concl., 1 Aug. 1942, CAB 65/27.

> the British Admiralty had made a mistake. The basis of the mistake was that the Tirpitz, even if it had come out of the fiord in which it was stationed, could not all the same have caught up with the convoy. The distance from the fiord to the convoy was too great. Consequently there was no justification for recalling the cruisers, and still more the destroyers.

Maisky added 'with emphasis', 'No one denies the great services of the British Navy in this war, but . . . but even British Admirals are not without sin.'[1]

The Russians' remarks were tactless, but beneath them lay a disappointment which was perhaps understandable. They were facing a serious situation on their own military front, for the Red Army's offensive against Kharkov in May had seriously misfired. The Wehrmacht was advancing after its own blow in the Kursk area in June and had brought to an end the nine-month-old siege of Sebastopol, an event which the Russians put in damning contrast to the Britons' swift loss of Tobruk on 21 June 1942.[2] The Russians needed relief, from either a second front or increased supplies, and were being denied both for reasons of which they, as a land power, had little understanding. They doubtless felt the injustice of PQ 17 which owed nothing directly to their incompetence and came just when they were exerting themselves in defence of the convoys. The British did not take them into their confidence and give them details of the shipping losses which paralysed their convoys.[3] All the Russians could see was that British boasts of 'making supplies available at the centres of production' were hollow, when it was on the Eastern front that these supplies were needed. What did it benefit them if 2,443 tanks were supplied but only 1,442 reached the Soviet Union on time; if only 1,323 of the 1,822 aircraft saw action in the summer, and an even smaller proportion of Bren carriers?[4] How could they rely on British aid if there were no guarantee that losses would be replaced,[5] and when in practice only minor items of civil equipment and spare parts for military equipment were replaced?[6]

Nonetheless, whatever their cause for complaint, Stalin and

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1 Maisky, Memoirs, p. 313.
2 Werth, Russia at War, pp. 368-9.
3 ADM 1/13092, Feb. 1943.
4 WP(42)417, 17 Sept. 1942, table A, CAB 66/28. See page 136.
5 WP(42)417, CAB 66/28. The Americans also assumed no obligation to replace losses during shipment (Visc. Halifax no. 329 USLON MOSSY, 18 June 1942, FO 371 32865 N2324/1/38.
6 ASE(42)172, MT 59/551.

Maisky did the British an injustice. They chose to ignore in the crisis of July what in the past they had freely acknowledged - that Britain's achievement under the first protocol was remarkable. Stalin had told the new ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, in March of his

> gratification at the promptitude and regularity with which supplies were arriving from Great Britain, which he confessed had taken him and his people by surprise, for they had been persuaded that we could not live up to our commitments and would fail as the Americans had.[1]

Britain had sacrificed her interests to maintain her commitments at a critical time in the war. She had ignored the reservations of her military chiefs and had compensated for the Americans in both tanks and aircraft without immediate repayment. She had provided more in major military items than the Americans[2] despite the vast disparity in their potential strength. The goodwill and readiness to fulfil obligations which Stalin said was lacking had dominated her thinking. It had ensured that the protocol was fulfilled in circumstances vastly different to those envisaged at the time of its signature in October 1941.

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1 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 4, 29 Mar. 1942, WO 193/645A. For Maisky's gratitude see conversation between him and Lyttelton, 9 Apr. 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/3. Stalin's comment contrasts strikingly with Roosevelt's statement to Morgenthau at approximately the same time.

2 Stettinius, Lend-Lease, p. 208.

MILITARY SUPPLIES UNDER THE PROTOCOL

Item	Promised	Made Available	Arrived U.S.S.R.	Sunk	En Route 25 July	Remarks
Fighter aircraft	1,800	1,822	1,323	288	211	
ARMY SUPPLIES						
Tanks (with ammunition)	2,250	2,443*	1,442	470	531+	* includes 127 sent in 1941 to meet USA deficiency and 92 extra sent in June 1942. + includes 285 from Canada.
Bren carriers	1,800	1,882	1,049	220	613*	* all from Canada
Bren Guns (with ammunition)	1,800	1,853	1,411	242	200	
2-pdr A/T Guns (with ammunition)	500	500	338	88	74	
Boys A/T rifles (with ammunition)	2,300	2,300	1,576	424	300	
M/T vehicles (trucks)	3,000	3,001	2,636	259	106	
NAVAL SUPPLIES						
A/M. M/S trawlers	9	9	7	2	-	
130 mm. Vickers Barrels with Locks and spare barrels	50	-	-	-	-	delivery at rate of 8 each month from Aug. 1942
A/A. M/Gs (with ammunition) -						
(i) Oerlikons	230	230	80*	30	-	* an additional 120 have been shipped from USA
(ii) Colts	300	300	100	-	200	
(iii) .5 Quads	61*	61	37	6	18	* 30 + balance of production
Asdics	100	57				
Storage Batteries	32	13	52 1	- 4	5 8	Balance for delivery by Sept. 1942

Source: CAB 66/28, WP(42) 417, Report on the Fulfilment of the Moscow Protocol, 17 September 1942, table A.
(The last three lines of the table are reproduced as in the original. Presumably, though, the last two lines of the 4th, 5th and 6th columns should be transposed upwards.)

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The Moscow or first 'protocol' was in many ways Britain's protocol. Her delegation had dominated its signature at Moscow; her navy had escorted its convoys to north Russia; her army had controlled the delivery of supplies through the Persian Gulf; and comparatively speaking, her performance had been the more impressive. This was a dominance by the British, however, which was not to last. In the second and succeeding protocols, the United States assumed her natural preeminence. Her industry realized its full potential and Russian needs changed to those which production on this scale alone could meet. Shipping was needed in quantities too, quite beyond British capacity, and the Persian Gulf demanded aid on scales which only the Americans could provide. The northern convoys alone remained predominantly Britain's sphere, and even here her merchant vessels formed the minority of those she escorted.

The effect of this change in the balance of the protocols was that British control over them diminished. For political and military reasons the British became increasingly eager in 1942 and 1943 to alter at least features of the supply agreement, but the wishes of the Americans, the dominant partner, prevailed. In many cases it was the wishes almost of Roosevelt alone, whose commitment to supplying the Soviet Union remained so uncritical that even when his advisers agreed with the British, he overruled them. The protocols therefore remained an unquestioning, diplomatic commitment, justified as before by a broad assumption of their political and military necessity, not by any critical analysis of the resources available to the three powers.

This was increasingly contrary to the thinking of the British who, wracked by the problems of the first protocol, were determined not to repeat them in the second. Any commitment after 30 June 1942, they came to believe in the spring, must be based on frank discussion with the Russians of their operational and production situation. 'Any further allocation of the available resources of the Allies in raw materials and munitions must be governed by the general war situation and by our strategic needs and plans'.[1] The best way such an allocation could be arranged, the

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1 ASE(42)93, 17 Mar. 1942, CAB 92/3. This is a draft memorandum by Eden, which later became DO(42)33.

British believed, was through another tripartite conference in Moscow. The difference between this and its predecessor would be that the Russians would have to justify their demands.

On this there was almost universal consensus in London. The Service departments, of course, had felt since Pearl Harbor that their claim on the scarce munitions and shipping resources was equal to that of the Russians, but through the spring they had become increasingly convinced of this by reports from the military mission in Moscow. These officers, denied any meaningful contact with their counterparts in the Soviet forces,[1] increasingly questioned the legitimacy of Russian claims for aid and the use to which British supplies were put. Technicians sent to train the Russians in the use of British weapons were often ignored,[2] and there were worrying stories of Russians, in their efforts to improvise, leaving spanners in engines, damaging machinery with which they were unfamiliar[3] and flying aircraft with their brakes on during take-off and landing.[4] Masses of tents, completely unsuitable for Russian conditions, were known to be arriving in the Soviet Union, and the air section of number 30 Military Mission thought that much of the parachute and gas equipment was unlikely to be used until after the war.[5] The mission became insistent that the flow of supplies should be conditional on greater Russian co-operation with them, and for some time they opposed the increase in spare parts on these grounds.[6] Eventually they were prepared to admit that the Russian skill at improvising was unique and that the Red Army was

> technically and operationally very well qualified to use the armaments against the Germans. Other things, and especially shipping, being equal we should undoubtedly give the Russians anything they ask for and we can spare.

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1 For a short history of the mission see J. Beaumont, 'A Question of Diplomacy: British Military Mission 1941-1945', Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, Sept. 1973.

2 Air Vice-Marshal Collier to CAS, AIR 2738, 3 Feb. 1942, AIR 2/7861; War diary entry for 30 April 1942, WO 178/26; the mission was reduced considerably in size in March 1942 (appendix D, March diary entry, WO 178/26).

3 Final report of 'Shallow' (Hurricane instruction party), 18 Jan. 1942, AIR 2/7861.

4 Report on conditions encountered during Operation 'Shallow', 10 Apr. 1942, AIR 46/21.

5 Final report of 'Shallow', loc. cit.

6 30 Mission, Moscow to Kuibyshev, MIL 3419, 6 Mar. 1942, WO 178/26.

But, Macfarlane advised the Chiefs of Staff on 13 April, 'as regards items which we urgently need ourselves we must make it clear that we cannot contemplate provision unless they prove to us that their need is greater and more imminent than ours. The situation is very different to what it was at the time of the Moscow conference.'[1]

There was a ready audience for this advice in London. The Joint Planners in their strategic directive for munitions' assignment on 29 March recommended that in future supplies should be based 'on Russian essential needs rather than on giving maximum aid to Russia within limits of transportation capability.'[2] The C.I.G.S. went further and wanted to force co-operation on the Russians before even agreeing to discuss the continuation of supplies. 'Hitherto', he said early in April, 'we had given everything to the Russians; we were now proposing to sign a treaty with them and we had still really got nothing in return. . . . before we embarked on any conference for the renewal of the Arms Protocol . . . he would want information in regard to Russian military dispositions, the state of their material, etc. At present we knew more about the German army on the Russian front than we did about the Russian army.'[3] The Foreign Office feared this type of démarche might do Anglo-Soviet relations 'incalculable harm',[4] but still agreed it was desirable to make the supply policy towards the Soviet Union more rational. A conference in Moscow it thought would achieve this, and would have the added political benefit of including the Russians in the type of discussion from which they had so far been excluded.[5] It would also be preferable to including the Russians on the Anglo-American committees since these were in their infancy, and it was unlikely that Moscow would delegate sufficient authority to any Soviet representative.

The A.S.E. as a whole, with Eden now as chairman after Beaverbrook's departure, agreed. It thought also that a conference would serve the further purpose of explaining to the Russians in detail the operational considerations which made it impossible for Britain to increase her supply commitments after June 1942.[6] Beaverbrook

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1 Macfarlane to COS, MIL 4219, 13 Apr. 1942, WO 178/26.
2 JP(42)332, 29 Mar. 1942, CAB 84/44.
3 Minute Cadogan for SOS, 9 Apr. 1942, FO 371 32864 N1875/1/38.
4 Minute by Mr. Warner of Northern dept., 12 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32898 N1294/23/38.
5 ASE(42)85, 16 Mar. 1942, CAB 92/3.
6 ASE(42)93, 17 Mar. 1942, CAB 92/3; confidential annex to ASE(42) 8th mtg, min. 5, 21 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32863 N1852/1/38.

had given an oral undertaking in October 1941 that, subject to enemy action or force majeure, supplies would be increased by 50 per cent in July 1942 and by a further 50 per cent at the end of that year.[1] He had the authority of Churchill for doing so at the time,[2] but events since then had made the promise unrealistic. Nonetheless the Russians were still anticipating an increase, since Beaverbrook, Maisky claimed, had taken it upon himself, when no longer a member of the government, to assure the ambassador that the promise still stood.[3]

With almost complete unanimity, therefore, London suggested to Washington that a supply conference be convened in Moscow to discuss the second protocol. There were a few dissenters to this recommendation, amongst them the Minister for Production and deputy-chairman of the A.S.E., Lyttelton. He thought that the pressure to reach a quick and spectacular agreement at this conference would force the British to make excessive promises, whether the Russians proved co-operative or not. What would be worse, the Russians would realize this and would be tempted to exploit it to their own advantage. Lyttelton therefore favoured, as did Portal[4] and E. P. Donaldson, of the A.S.E. secretariat,[5] the gradual incorporation of the Russians into the Anglo-American committees where their suspicions of the West would soon diminish.[6]

However, his proposals remained academic, as did those of the A.S.E. Both were dismissed by President Roosevelt who, though his own advisers sympathized with the British position, saw things very differently. He had given instructions to his Secretaries for War and the Navy on 24 March:

> I understand that, from a strategical point of view, the Army and Navy feel that aid to Russia should be continued and expanded to the maximum extent possible, consistent with shipping possibilities and the vital needs of the United States, the British Commonwealth of Nations, and other of the United Nations. I share such a view.
>
> . . . I desire that you submit to me by April 6th next the monthly assignment schedules of major items pertaining to your department which you recommend be offered to the U.S.S.R. during the period July 1, 1942 - June 30, 1943. It is appreciated that Soviet needs may not be known, but,

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1 ASE(42)93, loc. cit.
2 Guide for Lord Beaverbrook, 19 Sept. 1941, PREM 3 401/7.
3 Donaldson minute for Eden, 13 June 1942, FO 371 32934 N3189/178/38.
4 Minute to SOS, 19 Mar. 1942, AIR 19/20.
5 Memorandum by Donaldson, 14 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32863 N1545/1/38.
6 ASE(42)89, 18 Mar. 1942, CAB 92/3.

> when necessary, assumptions should be made which are based on your estimate of the Soviet situation.[1]

Not surprisingly, when confronted with the British proposal for a conference, the President declared it not feasible. The best approach, he declared, was for the United States and His Majesty's Government to determine what they could offer the Russians and inform them of this jointly.[2]

To the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, Admiral Standley, Roosevelt's decisions 'initiated a policy of appeasement of the Soviets',[3] and no doubt many in London agreed with him. They had no choice, however, but to acquiesce. Their proposed conference could succeed only if they and the Americans presented the Russians with a united front. Without this they could only do what Roosevelt had advised his subordinates to do - make assumptions about Russian needs and judge accordingly whether these or their own had priority. In practice this involved them once again in considerable difficulties. In tanks, for instance, although the British position had improved with an increased supply of medium tanks from the United States[4] and a surplus production of infantry tanks at home, the Defence Committee was divided as to how to allocate these supplies. Lyttelton wanted to give the Russians the promised 50 per cent increase,[5] but the C.I.G.S. argued that the surplus production was needed for the build-up for continental operations. He would not guarantee 'Sledgehammer', the landing in France then under consideration for 1942, unless more tanks boosted the armoured reserves.[6] Supplies from the United States were never totally reliable, given the shipping shortages —— in fact at that time production of Valentines in Great Britain was being cut by the failure of transmissions and suspensions to arrive from the United States.[7] The Defence Committee therefore, impressed by the need for a second front, decided on 29 April to maintain the offer of tanks at its present level only.[8]

At the same meeting it was decided to continue supplying aircraft at the previous rate of 200 a month until the end of the year. This was again a controversial decision, for Sinclair

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1 Leighton and Coakley, Global Logistics 1940-1943, p. 560.
2 FO to Washington, no. 2566, 15 Apr. 1942, FO 371 32863 N1865/1/38.
3 Standley and Ageton, Admiral Ambassador to Russia, p. 240.
4 Duncan Hall and Wrigley, Studies of Overseas Supply, p. 34.
5 WP(42)178, 26 Apr. 1942, CAB 66/24.
6 DO(42) 13th mtg, min. 2, 29 Apr. 1942, CAB 69/4.
7 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 381.
8 DO(42) 13th mtg, min. 2.

warned his colleagues that continuing the Russian commitment would mean running 'further risks in India or the Middle East, or the Trade Routes or in the night defence of our ports and factories'.[1] The Ministry of Aircraft Production however, disputed this, arguing that it was quite within Britain's capabilities to meet the Russian commitment with Hurricanes, Mustangs and Airacobras.[2] This was the view that prevailed.

No sooner had these decisions been communicated to the Americans on 2 May, however,[3] than the situation arose which the British had hoped to avoid with a tripartite conference. All their calculations were shattered by a major and unilateral reassesment of supply policy in the United States. This occurred because dissatisfaction had grown in Washington during the spring at the diversion of U.S. aircraft to other countries. American aircraft production had not expanded in the spectacular manner anticipated in January[4] and the U.S.A.A.F. failed to reach even its minimum programme in these months. Consequently in April Arnold and Marshall both vetoed an allocation of twenty-nine transport aircraft to the Russians which the M.A.B. had approved,[5] and proposed cuts in both British and protocol allocations in the future. As Arnold said on 1 April,

> as far as equipment was concerned, the Air Forces were treated like a sort of step-child. After all other nations were given the airplanes they asked for, the United States Air Forces received what was left.[6]

If America's build-up for operations in Europe was to proceed, Arnold said, this drain on aircraft must stop, and the Russians must receive 983 less aircraft in the second than in the first protocol.[7] Marshall, believing that the United States had gone beyond the 'reasonable point' in generosity,[8] presented a similar plan later in May.[9] Roosevelt, however, would consider neither of these recommendations, and insisted that the Russians should continue to receive 212 planes a month, at least until October

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1 Memorandum: Aircraft for Russia, 23 Apr. 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/8.
2 Llewellin (now Minister of Aircraft Production) to Lyttelton, 28 Apr. 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/13.
3 ASE(42)117, 2 May 1942, CAB 92/4.
4 Duncan Hall, pp. 361-2.
5 Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 207-10.
6 Lukas, Air Force Aspects . . ., p. 246.
7 Ibid., p. 248.
8 Matloff and Snell, p. 209.
9 Lukas, p. 250.

1942.[1] In compensation, however, he agreed to Arnold's plan for cutting British allocations. He adopted the principle that 'every appropriate aircraft built in the U.S.A. should be manned and fought by American crews,'[2] with the exception of the Soviet Union where because of 'geographic, logistic and racial problems the American planes will in general be flown and maintained by Russians'.[3]

This meant that British allocations, previously set at 7,000 for the months June to December 1942, were reduced to little more than 3,000.[4] This, in the opinion of the Air Ministry, amounted 'to a breach of faith . . . (which) would be disastrous in its effect not only on our ultimate expansion, but still more on our capacity to meet in this crucial year the present requirements of the R.A.F. in areas in which we are actually fighting.'[5] Although, as became clear in later negotiations, the Americans were to supply those R.A.F. squadrons using U.S. aircraft for which U.S. units could not be substituted, and were to send U.S. squadrons to British and Combined theatres of operations,[6] Portal feared 'a definite loss of impact against the enemy'. He doubted whether American units would be adequately trained or would arrive on the promised dates.[7] Even if they did, the fact remained that Air Ministry planning for 1942 was confounded. Whereas it had counted on vast increases in supplies with American belligerence, in the whole of 1942 it received only 1,653 more aircraft than in 1941.[8]

Despite this the British still maintained their offer of aircraft to the Soviet Union. Even it, they knew well, would disappoint their ally; and to supplement it, the A.S.E., despite the reservations of the Ministry of Aircraft Production,[9] offered a further 6,000 tons of aluminium in three monthly instalments of 2,000 tons each.[10] It also offered greater quantities of other military supplies for the second protocol period. Six hundred more Bren carriers from Canada, 100 more two-pounder anti-tank guns and 1,300 more anti-tank rifles were offered, as well as

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1 Lukas, pp. 246, 250.
2 Arnold-Towers-Portal (A/T/P) Agreement, 21 June 1942, AIR 8/648.
3 Craven and Cate, The Army Air Forces, p. 407.
4 Craven and Cate, p. 408.
5 COS(42)141(O), annex 3, 20 May 1942, AIR 8/647.
6 A/T/P Agreement, loc. cit.
7 Butler, Grand Strategy, p. 557.
8 Duncan Hall and Wrigley, p. 32.
9 ASE(42) 11th mtg, min. 3 (ii), 11 May 1942, CAB 92/2.
10 WM(42) 63rd concl., min. 3, 14 May 1942, CAB 65/26.

600 six-pounder anti-tank guns, a new commitment. Naval supplies outstanding from the last nine months were also maintained, and though there was no specific order for food, the British agreed to supply some as 'broken stowage' in ships carrying military supplies. Added to all this were substantial quantities of raw materials,[1] which brought the total tonnage promised to 800,000 to 1,000,000 tons.[2]

The extent of America's dominance in the second protocol is shown by the fact that her offer to the Soviet Union was over seven times this - 7.2 million short tons. Of this, 1.1 million were naval and military supplies and ammunition; 1.8 million tons were machinery and industrial equipment, and 4.3 million tons, food products,[3] which had been insignificant in the first protocol. Two hundred and twelve aircraft were promised each month until October 1942, and though this fell far short of the 300 a month the Russians wanted, they were promised in compensation 7,500 tanks, which was 2,250 more than they requested. Moreover, lorries were to be provided by the United States at a rate of 10,000 a month; scout cars and jeeps were to be continued on first protocol scales, and new items like motor cycles, radio equipment and prime movers for artillery were included. The United States in fact offered thirty-four items of military equipment alone[4] compared with less than one dozen on the shared U.S.-British list in the first protocol and only ten on the British schedule for the second.[5]

Together the British and American commitments amounted to over 8 million short tons. It was apparent to everyone, however, in view of the shipping difficulties then being experienced, that nowhere near this total could be transported to the Soviet Union. It was decided therefore in May by the informal committee Roosevelt set up under Hopkins to prepare the American schedules, to offer the Russians the full list of supplies from which they could choose 4.4 million short tons. This was the quantity which the C.S.A.B. estimated could be carried by the northern and Persian Gulf routes, a highly optimistic estimate in fact as was

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1 WP(43) 475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42.
2 FRUS, 1942, III, p. 709.
3 Ibid.
4 U.S. State Department, Wartime International Agreements, Soviet Supply Protocols, Publication 2759 (Washington, 1948) pp. 19 ff.
5 WP(42) 417, 17 Sept, 1942, CAB 66/28; WP(43) 475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42.

soon pointed out by Admiral King. Not only did it assume that losses on the northern route would be 10 per cent when in March, April and May they had been 18 per cent, but it took an unduly sanguine view of the Persian Gulf's capacity. General Marshall and Admiral King both thought the target unattainable, and told the President on 31 May that such a figure could be met only if some other war effort of the Allied nations were curtailed.[1]

Roosevelt, however, showed the facility, in the words of Admiral Andrew Cunningham, 'to sweep difficulties away with a wave of the hand'.[2] He did propose to Molotov, then visiting Washington, that the shipment of general supplies to the Soviet Union be reduced during the second protocol period from 2,300,000 tons to 700,000 so that more shipping could be diverted to 'Bolero', the build-up of troops in Britain for the invasion of the Continent. As he said to the Soviet Foreign Minister, every ship that could be shifted to the English run

> meant that the second front was so much nearer to being realized. After all, ships could not be in two places at once, and hence, every ton we could save out of the total of 4,100,000 tons would be so much to the good. The Soviets could not have their cake and eat it too.[3]

When Molotov seemed intent on doing just that, though, and actually asked Roosevelt to guarantee a convoy every month from the United States to north Russia,[4] the President did not press his point.[5] The plan to ship 4.4 million short tons of supplies, 3.3 million by the northern route and 1.1 million by the Persian Gulf, went ahead, and a clause to this effect was inserted in the protocol agreement.[6] To the annoyance of the British, who thought the estimate too optimistic[7] and who eschewed any definite shipping undertaking at all,[8] the Allies were committed to the following: 'Within the limits imposed from time to time by the factors mentioned' - escorts for the northern route, shortages of shipping and inland transportation in Persia - 'we will supply the shipping necessary to lift that part of the programme for which

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1 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 561-2.
2 Letter from Cunningham to 'Doodles' (an aunt), 23 Aug. 1942, ADD MSS 52559, British Museum. Cunningham was then on the BAD, Washington.
3 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 562-3.
4 FRUS 1942, III, pp. 707-8.
5 Leighton and Coakley, p. 563.
6 ASE(42)143, 8 June 1942, CAB 92/4.
7 AM to Britman, Washington, OZ.51, 20 Apr. 1942, PREM 3 401/11.
8 ASE(42) 8th mtg, confidential annex, 21 Mar. 1942, FO 371 32863 N1852/1/38.

U.S.S.R. ships can not be made available.'[1] What is more, the 'escape clause', thanks to Roosevelt, was considerably less specific than the British — and Marshall — wanted. It was stronger than in the first protocol certainly, but still a relatively unimpressive safeguard of Allied interests.

> It is understood (the clause read) that any program of this sort must be tentative in character and must be subject to unforeseen changes which the progress of the war may require from the standpoint of stores as well as from the standpoint of shipping.[2]

The second protocol, therefore, bore very much the mark of the Americans, and of Roosevelt in particular. Thanks to them it was exactly what the British had opposed - a statement of the maximum the Allies could provide and ship. Possibly the Americans were more realistic than the British: all experience with the Kremlin suggested that it would never provide the information needed for a rational analysis of the three Powers' needs and resources. Yet in many other ways the American approach was extremely unrealistic. Even before the protocol was formally signed in Washington on 6 October 1942 (it had been agreed to by the Russians and implemented from early in July), it was clear that much of it was inappropriate to the strategic situation then. It was impossible to predict with any accuracy even three months ahead either the shipping position or Russian needs, for both of these were constantly changing. A predetermined supply programme quickly lost its relevance.

As early as August, for instance, the Russians began altering the emphases of their demands. One of the first opportunities they seized to do this was Churchill's visit to Moscow in the middle of this month. Like the supply conference eleven months earlier this meeting coincided with one of the most profound military crises on the Eastern front - in the preceding week the Red Army had lost 750 guns, 1,000 tanks and 57,000 prisoners of war to the Wehrmacht.[3] This conference also was one of fluctuating moods, and though it ended on a note of extreme cordiality, its second day saw bitter recrimination by the Russians, including an attack on the protocol programme.[4] On this day Stalin, it

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1 ASE(42)143, loc. cit.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 563.
3 M. Howard, Grand Strategy, vol. IV, August 1942 - September 1943 (London: HMSO, 1972), p. 31.
4 See Churchill, The Second World War, IV, pp. 425-51 for a full account of the conference.

seems, was reflecting the dismay of the Soviet High Command, the Stavka, at Churchill's news that the continental landing had been abandoned in favour of landings in north Africa.[1] As well, Stalin may have been influenced not simply by the news from the front but by the behaviour of the British Generals, which, almost without exception,[2] was offensive. Clark Kerr wrote of the British meeting with the Soviet Assistant Commissar for Defence, Marshal Boris Shaposhnikov, at Moscow airport:

> I was struck by the bad manners of our soldiers. After introductions they left the sick old man standing, alone and abandoned, to watch them while they chatter among themselves and fussed quite unnecessarily, about their luggage. Finally I had to take hold of Wavell, who speaks Russian, and make him be polite. He was surprised.[3]

Another member of the embassy staff recorded similar impressions:

> The Generals, I thought, distinguished themselves by their bad, or rather, inadequate manners. For instance: Wavell sat next to Malenkov at the Kremlin dinner, and, although making a competent speech in Russian, never addressed a single word to his eunuch-like neighbour. I was sitting next to Voroshilov, a fine hearty old soul, willing to talk about anything with great vivacity and expertise, but the CIGS who was sitting on the other side of him could hardly be induced to stop masticating to answer his occasional questions.[4]

It is understandable, perhaps, that at his gloomiest meeting with Churchill Stalin insisted that the backlog in supplies was caused not by enemy action but by 'an underestimate of the importance of the Russian front. This led to supplies only being given from the remnant of equipment which could be spared'.[5] What the Red Army needed immediately, he said later, was aluminium and lorries - as many as 20,000 to 25,000 monthly - in preference to tanks,

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1 Ulam, Stalin, p. 572.
2 The exception being Air Marshal Tedder of Middle East Command, who was 'beyond praise and got on hugging terms with No. 1 Gestapo Chief Beria, who was very drunk' at the Kremlin banquet. (Clark Kerr's personal account of Churchill's Moscow visit, FO 800/300.)
3 Ibid.
4 Letter from John Reed, 19 Aug. 1942, FO 800/300. Major A. Birse, Churchill's interpreter at this and later conferences, told the author in June 1974 that Wavell's Russian was very poor. G. M. Malenkov was a member of the State Defence Committee. Marshal K. E. Voroshilov was vice-president of the Council of People's Commissars and a member of the State Committee of Defence.
5 Minutes of mtg of 13 Aug. 1942, FO 800/300.

of which the Soviet Union was producing 2,000 a month.[1]

This was the first of many indications of the Red Army's growing need for mobility, and this kind of request characterized the rest of the protocol period. The demand for lorries continued, together with pleas for transport aircraft, aluminium and food, all reflecting the Russian retreat in autumn 1942 over vast expanses of territory in the south. On 1 August Maisky admitted that the Soviet Union had lost three-quarters of its aluminium supplies,[2] and in early September he pleased for lorries and 'hundreds' of transport aircraft.[3] In response the British agreed to supply a further 6,000 tons of aluminium from September to December,[4] and in the following months provided 520 three-ton and 382 thirty-cwt lorries.[5] Furthermore, even though they were almost entirely dependent on the United States for supplies of transport aircraft themselves,[6] they offered as a gesture to the Russians one hundred Albermarles which could be converted to carry troops.[7]

This did not satisfy the Russians. Late in September Stalin again pressed their claims during the visit of another Allied dignatory. This time it was Wendell Willkie, who had previously been Roosevelt's election opponent but was now the President's special emissary to the Soviet leader. At a banquet given in the American's honour on 26 September Stalin attacked the Allies for sending the Red Army obsolescent aircraft - Hurricanes instead of Spitfires and Kittyhawks instead of the desired Airacobras.[8] He also complained bitterly at the fact that 150 Airacobras en route to north Russia had been diverted[9] to the U.S.A.A.F. in Britain on 12 September. This had been done at the express request of General Marshall to assist the preparations for the invasion of north Africa,[10] but Stalin was not impressed with the

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1 Churchill, IV, p. 450; note for Sir Walter Layton, 7 Sept. 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/8.
2 ASE(42)168, CAB 92/4.
3 ASE(42)176, annex A and B, 7 Sept. 1942, CAB 92/4.
4 ASE(42)184, 1 Oct. 1942, CAB 92/4.
5 WP(43)475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42.
6 ASE(42) 19th mtg, min. 3, 11 Sept. 1942, CAB 92/2.
7 Minute Eden to PM, PM/42/90, 23 Sept. 1942, PREM 3 401/17.
8 FRUS, 1942, III, p. 725.
9 Ibid., p. 643.
10 In fact the number of planes diverted was 176 (Staff conference at Chequers, 12 Sept. 1942, PREM 3 395/5). They were to be replaced via the Alaska-Siberia route in October, November and December (Tel. AGHWAR, W'ton, 12 Sept. 1942, PREM 3 401/21).

British ambassador's response that he had lost sight of the common cause in which the machines had been retained.[1] Clark Kerr wrote later to Mr. Warner of the Northern department of the Foreign Office:

> Willkie had told me that he (Stalin) was mudsick about the Airacobras, but it had not occurred to me that he would blurt it all out, as gracelessly as he did, over his dinner table. When I got back to my bed I thought of a dozen different formulae I might have used, and did not, in my reply. Indeed from my bed I squelched him flat, whereas at the banquet I feared that I left him as plump and pear-shaped as God made him.[2]

As if to demonstrate this, Stalin on 3 October approached both Roosevelt and Churchill with a further request for aircraft. The month of October, he later admitted, was the most dangerous time for the Soviet Union in the whole war,[3] and German troops had advanced into the heart of Stalingrad on the Volga. They had been able to do this, Stalin told Churchill and Roosevelt, partly because they had attained a 2 to 1 superiority in aircraft in the area. As a result the Red Army needed from its allies 800 fighters a month, 300 from the British and 500 from the Americans. These supplies, Stalin said, were more urgent than tanks and artillery, which they could temporarily replace.[4] He went on further in the days that followed to ask for more aluminium, more explosives, two million tons of grain and a guarantee of 8,000 to 10;000 trucks a month.[5] Shipments of the last of these had fallen greatly into arrears[6] and Soviet production could in no way compensate. It was, as Stalin had admitted two months earlier, only a meagre 3,000 lorries a month.[7] Grain meanwhile had become a much scarcer commodity than even the Kremlin had anticipated. In July it had excluded wheat from the list of goods with high priority for shipping[8] but now, as Molotov told Standley on 6 October,

> The Germans had taken all of the Ukraine and the North Caucasus and much of the black soil region, which were among the richest food producing areas of the country. The food situation would therefore be bad during the winter. The Soviet

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1 Woodward, II, p. 275.
2 3 Oct. 1942, FO 800/300.
3 Werth, Russia at War, p. 443.
4 Stalin to PM, T.1293/2, 3 Oct. 1942, AIR 8/1054.
5 Leighton and Coakley, p. 584.
6 By the end of October the United States had exported only 10,224 trucks against a commitment of 40,000 (ASE(42)207, 22/12/42, CAB 92/4).
7 Note for Sir Walter Layton, 7 Sept. 1942, BT 28/144, SEC/12/8.
8 FRUS, 1942, III, p. 712.

> Union would need 2,000,000 tons of wheat and a correspondingly large quantity of concentrated foodstuffs such as butter, condensed milk, lard, meat products, and so forth. If Great Britain and the United States could transfer ships to operate under the Soviet flag these products could be imported through Pacific ports.[1]

Apart from the critical situation on the Russian front at this time, there were strong political reasons for meeting these requests, at least in part. As Stalin's attack at the dinner for Willkie had shown, the Allies' standing with the Kremlin had declined drastically in the two months since Churchill's visit to Moscow. Throughout September Russian representatives in Washington, London and Moscow pressed for assurances about the second front[2] which, as a result of Molotov's visit to Washington in May and June, they expected in 1942. The official statement after this meeting had said that 'full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942'.[3] When by October, it was clear that this action had been postponed, the Russian press assumed a bitter tone. Willkie had declared himself in favour of a second front,[4] and so it was the British who were cast as the villains. On 6 October Pravda published a vicious cartoon which showed, in the words of the Sunday Times journalist, Alexander Werth,

> a number of bald-headed and walrus-moustached Blimps sitting round a table and facing two dashing young soldiers in American uniform. These two were labelled 'General Guts' and 'General Decision', while the Blimps were called 'General What-if-they-lick-us', 'General What's-the-hurry', 'General Why-take-risks', and so on.[5]

The cartoon was entitled 'The Second Front'. On the day it appeared Stalin's reply to questions submitted to him by the Assoc-iated Press correspondent, Henry Cassidy, was also published. In this the Russian leader said that the second front occupied a place of first-rate importance in the current situation, and that, compared with the aid the Soviet Union was giving the Allies by drawing upon itself the main German forces, 'the aid of the Allies

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1 FRUS, 1942, III, p. 729.
2 Woodward, II, pp. 272-5.
3 Butler, p. 595.
4 Werth, Russia at War, p. 444.
5 Werth, p. 445.

to the Soviet Union has so far been little effective'.[1]

Public reaction to this in Britain was dulled by the shock at the Dieppe raid casualties which indicated the likely cost of a continental invasion in 1942.[2] Nonetheless the government still felt under pressure to respond to Stalin's pleas for aid, especially as at this time they were forced by shortage of escorts to abandon the convoys to north Russia.[3] The Chief of Air Staff therefore agreed to provide 'at real risk and sacrifice' a once-only offer of 150 Spitfires with an extra 50 as spare parts.[4] Recognizing that this offer was primarily a 'political gift', he offered Spitfires with cannon,[5] not machine-guns since these, it was known, the Russians thought were of little use.[6]

Portal's counterparts in the United States, however, were not so easily persuaded to make a gesture to the Russians. Under pressure from Roosevelt and the Soviet representatives,[7] the Joint Chiefs of Staff did extend the aircraft commitment of 212 a month after it expired on 30 September; but they would not make any increase on this, as Roosevelt wished in view of Stalin's plea. The President had hoped that, by reducing U.S. coastal defences, he could offer the Russians an extra 300 aircraft, but Marshall insisted that this would affect 'active combat theatres' or seriously curtail 'Torch'. Roosevelt had therefore to rest content with offering Stalin the food, trucks, explosives and twenty ships for the Pacific he had requested.[8] Nevertheless, to go some addition-al way towards meeting the Russian demand for aircraft - and to compensate them for the loss of the northern convoys - the President gave his full support to the plans the British then had for sending air squadrons to south Russia early in 1943.[9]

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1 W. P. and Z. K. Coates, Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 733. For Cassidy's account see H. C. Cassidy, Moscow Dateline (Boston, 1943). This outburst was followed little more than a week later by a violent campaign against the British government for its handling of the capture of Rudolph Hess. Pravda called England 'a sanctuary for gangsters' (Werth, p. 446).

2 HIWR, no. 105, 29 Sept.- 6 Oct. 1942, INFO 1/292C.

3 See p. 159.

4 Portal to PM, 1807, 7 Oct. 1942, AIR 8/1054.

5 CAS minute to PM, 17 Oct. 1942, PREM 3 401/14.

6 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 243 DEDIP, 12 Oct. 1942, FO 371 32936.

7 Leighton and Coakley, p. 563.

8 Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning . . . 1941-1942, pp. 346-8; Leighton and Coakley, p. 586.

9 R. E. Sherwood, The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, vol. II (London, 1949), p. 636; Matloff and Snell, p. 331. For a full account see Howard, pp. 34-40.

'Velvet', as this project was called, however, proved to be no substitute as far as the Soviet government was concerned for an increased supply of aircraft. When it was originally offered in August, in compensation for the cancellation of the convoys and the six R.A.F. squadrons,[1] Stalin had indicated that the operation would be valuable.[2] Moreover, his subordinate, Marshal Voroshilov, had accepted at the August meeting in Moscow the need for preliminary reconnaissance and a liaison mission in Moscow. The Russians, however, made it clear on this occasion that they would not welcome any offer which did not specify the size, composition and date of arrival of the air forces in the Soviet Union;[3] and even when such an offer was made, Stalin proved slow to respond. Churchill on 8 October, when breaking the news of the new interruption in the convoys, offered 5 bomber and 9 fighter squadrons from the R.A.F. and one transport and one heavy bombardment squadron from the U.S.A.A.F. 'early in the New Year'.[4] He got no reply from Stalin accepting this offer until 5 November.[5] And then, when the crisis on the southern Russian front receded with the Red Army's counterstroke against the Axis armies on 19-20 November, the Russians' 'almost fanatical urge to keep foreigners out of the Caucasus' revived.[6] Air Marshal Drummond, sent to Moscow at the head of an Anglo-American mission to discuss 'Velvet' late in November, found the Chief Air Staff Officer, Lieutenant-General Fedor Falalaev, in complete ignorance of the plan. Even when Falalaev had consulted his superiors, the Russians asked not for the squadrons but for the planes alone, for to send the squadrons, the Russians knew, would jeopardize the flow of supplies through Iran.[7] London and Washington would not consider this proposal though. It would amount simply to another gift of aircraft and would deny the whole political value of the combined operation. As Portal cabled to Drummond on 1 December, 'the whole raison d'etre of the plan' had been not only the development of 'practical co-operation of a considerable scale' but also the encouragement of 'a genuine spirit of comradeship in arms which would have opened up considerable possibilities in the political and military fields.'[8]

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1 JP(42)703(O), 29 July 1942, CAB 84/47.
2 Sherwood, II, p. 617.
3 Howard, p. 36.
4 Howard, p. 37.
5 Matloff and Snell, p. 333; Stalin to PM, T.1470/2, AIR 9/313.
6 Air Marshal Sir R. M. Drummond, quoted in Lukas, p. 350n.
7 Howard, p. 38.
8 CAS to Drummond, OZ.2077, 1 Dec. 1942, AIR 9/313; Howard, pp. 38-39.

Consequently the Anglo-American mission left Moscow on 26 December with 'Velvet' moribund. The Allied successes in north Africa and the Russian victory at Stalingrad in the following month destroyed it completely. Not only was almost 70 per cent of the Luftwaffe's single-engine fighters diverted to the Western and Mediterranean theatres by February 1943,[1] but the German threat to the Caucasus and the Middle East, which had originally motivated British concern,[2] was eliminated.

While the discussions about 'Velvet' had been going on, the Russians had continued to press their claims for aircraft through other channels. Maisky, on the scent of the prized Spitfires, asked less than three weeks after the 150 had been offered in October, for a regular commitment of 100 Spitfires a month. This would have brought the British monthly commitment of fighters after December 1942 to 300, the number Stalin had requested earlier. In addition, the ambassador pressed for the number of Albemarles to be increased from the 100 offered to 500, and for the R.A.F. to ferry the first 50 to the Soviet Union.[3] The British turned down these requests, however;[4] for at this stage they had not even decided whether they could afford to maintain the current protocol commitment of 200 fighters a month after the end of 1942. They had no commitment to do so, but under Russian pressure they had agreed to include in the second protocol agreement a promise that they would give further consideration 'before the termination of their present commitment . . . to the question of continuing or increasing supplies of aircraft after the end of 1942'. They had not given any undertaking in the matter.[5]

Naturally, though, since Russian pressure for help was so great at this time and the conflict on the Eastern front so critically balanced, the British found themselves forced to maintain the commitment - at least at its existing level. Lyttelton, on a visit to Washington in November and December, arranged for 150 fighters a month to be provided from the United States over the next twelve months as part of the British commitment to the Russians. In December 1942 all of these planes would be Airacobras, of which the Russians were now inordinately fond, while from January to March

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1 Lukas, p. 347.
2 JP(42)703(O) loc. cit.
3 FO to Moscow, no. 301, 26 Oct. 1942, FO 371 32936 N5568/178/38.
4 FO to Moscow, no. 1531, 9 Nov. 1942, ibid; FO to Moscow, no. 389 DEDIP, 12 Dec. 1942, FO 371 32937 N6287/178/38.
5 ASE(42)184, annex III, 1 Oct. 1942, CAB 92/4.

1943 there would be 300 Kittyhawks, a less popular aircraft, and 150 Airacobras. In return for this, the British would provide 600 Spitfires for the U.S.A.A.F. squadrons operating in the United Kingdom, and would meet the balance of their commitment to the Russians by supplying 50 Hurricanes a month. This arrangement was possible only because Roosevelt, with the invasion of north Africa on 8 November, felt that he had placated domestic opinion; he could now relax his rule of American planes for American pilots in favour of the idea of 'impact'.[1] Furthermore, American aircraft production was rapidly accelerating at last, and even though Roosevelt had admitted on 24 October that his 'Arcadia' target of 100,000 aircraft in 1943 was unattainable, even his reduced target of 82,000 aircraft presented boundless possibilities.[2] The British were promised 7,412 aircraft in 1943: in addition to the 1,800 fighters for the Russians there would be 4,611 aircraft for the R.A.F., 2,201 for the Fleet Air Arm and 600 transport aircraft.[3]

Despite this, the Air Ministry did not agree to actually increase the offer of aircraft to the Russians after 1942. It suspected that any further offer above 200 fighters monthly would have to include Spitfires, and these it was not prepared to sacrifice. Moreover, it was already plagued with the problems of trying to clear the backlog of aircraft which had resulted from the shipping difficulties earlier in the year. Since this amounted to hundreds, it seemed unrealistic to make larger promises for 1943. Furthermore, there was still the strong feeling in the Air Ministry that the Russians had yet to present a convincing case to show that their need for the aircraft was greater than Britain's. Slessor, Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Policy), wrote to Portal on 15 December:

> At present both we and the Americans tremble when a Russian arrives on the doorstep, and immediately give him all he wants on first priority. No wonder they keep the screw (sic) on - it's a glorious arrangement from their point of view. I think we are now in a position - especially after their rejection of Velvet - to put them through something of the same sort of 'third degree' that I have been going through during November in Washington.[4]

And three days later:

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1 WP(42)568, 9 Dec. 1942, CAB 66/31.
2 Pres Roosevelt to PM, T.1370/2, 24 Oct. 1942, BT 87/12.
3 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 392.
4 AIR 20/3904.

I would advise very strongly against any increase in our fighter allocations, anyway until mid-1943 when the Typhoon may be fit for export and when it will have adequate spares to satisfy the Russians. The present situation is that we cannot meet our existing obligations and this gives rise to continual trouble with the Russians. At the same time continuous pressure is being brought upon us still further to increase our obligations when we should know perfectly well that any advantage from making further promises is entirely evanescent and there is the immediate sequel of still further and indeed well justified suspicion and mistrust on the part of the Russians. We are in fact being constantly urged to issue dud cheques.
. . . D.W.O. agrees.[1]

Slessor's remarks were prompted by the appalling backlog in both American and British deliveries to the Soviet Union at the end of the year. Thanks to problems of the supply routes American supplies were 'far behind' schedule and by the end of November - the critical days at Stalingrad - only 840,000 short tons had been shipped against a scheduled 1,608,000 tons.[2] Meanwhile the British anticipated being 545 tanks and 949 aircraft short of their commitments by 31 December, and though 429 of the aircraft were Airacobras to be supplied from the United States via Alaska, the Air Ministry still anticipated being 120 planes behind schedule when the convoy situation became uncertain in the spring of 1943.[3] Likewise the War Office expected to have cleared by March only its backlog of 545 tanks and to be faced with the task of shipping 910 tanks in the last three perilous months of the protocol. This performance stung one Foreign Office official to comment:

> The War Office and the Air Ministry seem to be going on the principle of supplying to the Russians whatever can be made available from our surplus production. They seem to ignore entirely the fact that we have entered into certain definite commitments to the Russians and that the fulfilment of those commitments is one of our strongest political cards, and I cannot understand why these Service departments were prepared to enter these commitments if there was so little chance of carrying them out. They can scarcely give the North African campaign as an excuse, since we must suppose that they contemplated offensive action being taken <u>somewhere</u> in the period from June 1942 to June 1943 and they must have agreed to their commitments accordingly.[4]

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1 Minute, 18 Dec.1942, AIR 20/3906. D.W.O. = Director of War Organisation.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p.586.
3 WP(42)602, 24 Dec. 1942, FO 371 32878 N6606/1/38.
4 Minutes discussing draft of ASE(42)207, 21 Dec. 1942, FO 371 32937 N6576/178/38.

In their defence, however, the Service departments could answer that, when they had agreed to the second protocol, they had been loath to give any assurances about their ability to ship the supplies; and since then PQ 17 had wrought havoc with all their calculations.

Indeed the cancellation of the northern convoys had hit shipments from the United Kingdom to the Soviet Union very severely, for in the wake of PQ 17 the U.S. and British governments had agreed that the former should have almost exclusive use of the Persian Gulf route and the latter 'absolute priority' in any future Arctic convoys.[1] The Americans assumed control in August of the railways and ports of Iran,[2] leaving the overall strategic responsibility for the area and the right to decide 'priority of traffic and the allocation of freight' in the hands of the British General Officer Commanding Persia and Iraq Command.[3] The Russians agreed to use the Persian Gulf route for American supplies alone (with the exception of raw materials from the Indian Ocean area),[4] and a new target of 200,000 tons of Soviet supplies a month was set for the route.[5] To make this possible, supplies for the Russians by the southern route were given equal shipping priority with the Middle East and 'Torch'. The northern convoys meanwhile were relegated to third place after the movement of U.S. air forces to the United Kingdom.[6] There were obvious political disadvantages for the British in this arrangement - during breaks in the convoys it would appear that aid from the United Kingdom had ceased - but the A.S.E. accepted this for the sake of economy of shipping. The routes from the United States to the Persian Gulf and from Britain to north Russia were approximately equal in length. It was irrational to send supplies from Britain to Iran when so many of their components had already been imported from the United States. In any case, supplies held in Britain for shipment to north Russia in the autumn of 1942 were likely, the British thought in July, to reach their destination sooner than those sent via the southern route, in view of the shorter sailing time. Moreover, these supplies would arrive at the port of discharge the Russians preferred.[7]

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1 ASE(42)164, 23 July 1942; CAB 92/4.
2 Matloff and Snell, p. 337.
3 Leighton and Coakley, p. 577.
4 FRUS, 1942, III, p. 718.
5 Leighton and Coakley, p. 575.
6 COS(42)235th mtg, min. 2, 13 Aug. 1942, CAB 79/22.
7 ASE(42)16th mtg, min. 1, 24 July 1942, CAB 92/2.

Unfortunately for the British, however, it proved impossible to run as many Arctic convoys as they anticipated in the summer they would. In August the Ministry of War Transport had plans for three convoys in September and October, which would have brought protocol shipments up to date;[1] but in the event only one of these sailed. Convoys in August were ruled out by the vital operation to supply the besieged Malta. This absorbed an aircraft carrier, a battleship, three cruisers and eleven destroyers from the Home Fleet.[2] Sailings to north Russia at this time were limited to two Russian merchantmen[3] and an American task force of the heavy cruiser, the Tuscaloosa, and two destroyers. Neither of these operations suffered loss, for the American ships, carrying general cargo and R.A.F. squadrons for convoy defence in north Russia, were covered by fog;[4] the Russian vessels meanwhile travelled slowly and independently.[5]

The large convoys planned for September and October, however, posed far greater problems. The German aircraft, submarines and surface vessels which had caused the Admiralty such anxiety in the spring were still in northern Norway posing the same threat - until the winter darkness came - to the convoys and their escorts. The Tirpitz, Scheer, and Hipper had moved from Trondheim to Narvik, and there were now 92 German torpedo bombers and 133 long-range and dive bombers in northern Norway.[6] Consequently the one convoy which did sail in September, PQ 18, was a formidable enterprise. It involved, for the protection of 40 merchantmen, 77 warships, and included for the first time, an aircraft carrier.[7] It was in fact the most heavily armed convoy the British mounted for the Arctic route,[8] and to protect it further they sent Hampden torpedo bombers, photographic reconnaissance Spitfires and long-range reconnaissance Catalinas to north Russia.[9] The Russians too, stung into action by an eleventh-hour appeal from Churchill,[10] provided 48 long-range bombers, 10 torpedo bombers and 200 fighters to supplement the 104 Russian aircraft already in the north.[11]

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1 ASE(42)170, 4 Aug. 1942, FO 371 32935 N4036/178/38.
2 Roskill, The War at Sea, II, p. 278.
3 Ibid.
4 Morison, History of United States Naval Operations . . ., I, p. 359.
5 Roskill, p. 278.
6 Roskill, II, pp. 277, 282.
7 Howard, p. 42.
8 Morison, I, p. 364.
9 Roskill, II, pp. 278-9.
10 PM to Premier Stalin, T.1190/2, 6 Sept.1942, PREM 3 393/4.
11 30 MM to AM, AIR 840, 10 Sept. 1942, AIR 20/4896.

In addition they provided four destroyers which joined the convoy as it entered the Barents Sea and gave it great assistance against air attack.[1]

Despite this powerful defence, PQ 18 suffered heavy, though not prohibitive, casualties. Thirteen of its merchantmen were lost, ten of them to intense air attack.[2] Although the Luftwaffe itself lost forty aircraft and was never to employ such strength again in the north,[3] the conclusions the British drew from this convoy were not entirely comforting. PQ 18 had had the protection of an aircraft carrier and a balanced shore-based air force. It had sailed also at the furthest northern limit to which the Arctic ice receded.[4] Still its merchantmen had been vulnerable to air attack 450 miles from the Norwegian coast. Obviously those of future convoys would be similarly threatened, as long as the enemy chose to remain in northern Norway. His airfields there could not be neutralized effectively, for air bombardment, no matter how sustained, was a weapon of limited value. (Malta's sustained defence throughout the year had shown the enemy this in the Mediterranean.) Amphibious operations to clear the Luftwaffe from northern Norway, meanwhile, were not a practical proposition. Churchill's nagging and grandiose schemes for 'rolling up the map of Europe' notwithstanding, the Chiefs of Staff insisted a landing in Norway would only court disaster.[5]

Consequently the danger to the convoys continued to be great and their demands on the Royal Navy remained large. This meant, since the production of escorts in the United States had failed to meet expectations in 1942,[6] that PQ convoys could not be run simultaneously with 'Torch', the invasion of north Africa. This the Cabinet had known since August at least,[7] but the blow to its calculations came in September when the date for 'Torch' was set. The Commanding Officer, General D. D. Eisenhower, proposed 8 November, a date which for fear of deteriorating weather or a breach in security the Chiefs of Staff were eager to accept. This date however, meant no more northern convoys could be run, as had been planned, in October; as the First Sea Lord told Churchill on 21

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1 Morison, I, p. 363.
2 Roskill, II, p. 285.
3 Ibid., pp. 285, 288.
4 Ibid., p. 283.
5 Howard, p. 34.
6 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 398.
7 WM(42)110th concl., min. 2, conf. annex, CAB 65/31.

September, a convoy after PQ 18 would mean postponing 'Torch' for seventeen to twenty days.[1] With great reluctance, therefore, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet were forced to conclude that day that convoys should be cancelled until the end of 1942.[2]

Churchill took this decision with great trepidation. It was known that the Russian nation was under almost unendurable pressure and that only a few weeks earlier morale had almost cracked with the serious reverses in the south.[3] In his message to Roosevelt, informing him of the decision, Churchill said,

> To sum up my persistent anxiety is Russia, and I do not see how we can reconcile it with our consciences or with our interests to have no more PQs till 1943, no offers to make joint plans for 'Jupiter', and no signs of a spring, summer or even autumn offensive in Europe.[4]

The President for his part shared the dismay. Only one month earlier he had stressed to Admiral Cunningham in Washington the 'absolute necessity' of continuing the northern convoys. Fearing that the Kremlin might now make a separate peace, he urged the British to maintain the convoys in small groups sailing at one- or two-day intervals rather than abandon them completely.[5] This the Admiralty had already considered and rejected;[6] but in view of the President's wishes and the deep concern in Moscow at the delay in shipments, particularly of trucks,[7] it agreed to allow ships to sail for north Russia independently. From the end of October onwards, therefore, thirteen British and American merchantmen set sail at intervals of about 200 miles. Their only protection was a few trawlers along the route for life-saving and some submarines patrolling north of Bear Island.[8] Not surprisingly, the operation, in the words of the U.S. naval historian S. E. Morison, was 'not considered a success'. Only five of the ships arrived in north Russia; three of the others turned back, four were sunk and one was wrecked.[9] Twenty-eight ships returning in November after some months in north Russia, enjoyed greater success, thanks to the darkness and the bad weather which prevented the German surface

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1 COS(42)125th mtg(O), CAB 79/87.
2 Howard, p. 42.
3 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 121, 4 Sept. 1942, FO 371 32913 N4566/30/38.
4 Howard, pp. 42-3. 'Jupiter' = operation to clear the Germans from northern Norway.
5 1st SL to PM, TULIP no. 233, 21 Aug. 1942, PREM 3 393/5.
6 Howard, p. 43.
7 FRUS, 1942, III, pp. 726-7, 737.
8 Roskill, II, pp. 288-9.
9 Morison, I, p. 365.

ships putting to sea.[1]

Obviously such efforts could in no way compensate for the cancellation of the convoys, and Britain's commitments fell further into arrears during November. Maisky, who had been grateful for the independent sailings,[2] pressed the British to fly aircraft across Africa or, alternatively, from the Shetlands to Kandelas in north Russia;[3] but the British refused. The route across Africa was already congested with their own needs,[4] and the navigational hazards on the other route were extreme.[5] It was therefore a sorry situation which Eden had to report to the Cabinet on 13 November, and he confessed that the 'present failure to maintain the flow of supplies has contributed to the difficulty of keeping on good terms with Russia'.[6] Almost immediately on his saying this, relations with the Kremlin did improve; Stalin broke the ominous silence he had maintained since being told of the convoy cancellation, and on 14 November congratulated Churchill on the victory at El Alamein.[7] But the reprieve was short-lived, for the Russians were expecting a rapid exploitation of this victory and the resumption of a normal convoy cycle in December - and neither of these they received.

For when the convoys resumed in December they were smaller and less frequent than hoped, and they in no way cleared the mounting backlog of supplies. The reason for this was again the shortage of escorts, for although the air threat to the convoys declined in November with the diversion of the Luftwaffe to north Africa, in the same month Allied shipping losses soared; 863,000 tons of merchant shipping were lost in November, the highest total of any month in the war.[8] The Admiralty, fearing a break in the merchant navy's morale, was forced to reinforce the Atlantic convoys.[9] As a result it could not resume the Arctic convoys at the old rate of three sailings every two months as it had promised the Russians.[10]

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1 Roskill, II, p. 289.
2 Minute Eden to PM, 23 Oct. 1942, PREM 3 393/14.
3 ASE(42) 21st mtg, min. 4, 3 Nov. 1942, CAB 92/2.
4 Ibid.
5 ASE(42) 22nd mtg, min. 2, 27 Nov. 1942, CAB 92/2.
6 Howard, p. 42.
7 See Howard, p. 43. On 13 November Stalin had sent a second letter - this time complimentary to the Allies - to Cassidy (Werth, p. 450).
8 Morison, I, p. 412.
9 Minute by First Sea Lord for PM, 22 Nov. 1942, PREM 3 393/7.
10 Ibid; COS(42) 187th mtg (O), 23 Nov. 1942, CAB 79/58.

There were more German U-boats than ever in the northern waters[1] and the Americans could not provide further destroyers to help the Royal Navy meet this threat, though they were asked to do so on 18 November.[2] Consequently Churchill could promise Stalin on 24 November only a convoy of 30 ships to sail from Iceland on 22 December,[3] an offer which the Russian leader actually accepted with unaccustomed grace. In a telegram which reflected his pleasure at the change of fortunes in Stalingrad and Africa, Stalin declared himself 'grateful' for the new convoy and said, 'I realize that in view of the considerable naval operations in the Mediterranean sea this constitutes great difficulty for you.'[4]

In fact the December convoy, which sailed in two parts owing to the difficulty of controlling it in dark and stormy conditions,[5] lost none of its thirty ships. It even engaged and damaged the Hipper, which never saw active service again.[6] The January convoy, however, was disappointingly small. Churchill had promised Stalin on 29 December that this would contain thirty or more ships; but, in view of the shortage of escorts, the Prime Minister, in consultation with the Admiralty, the Ministry of War Transport and Harriman, was forced to conclude on 5 January 1943 that only twenty ships could sail in that month. The February and March convoys meanwhile the meeting set at 28 to 30 ships and 30 ships respectively.[7]

The Anglo-American conference at Casablanca later in the month confirmed this retrenchment. The Americans declared on this occasion that they could not provide destroyers for protection of the northern convoys. Already, Admiral King declared, they were sixty-five escorts short on the Atlantic convoy route, and this shortage would be aggravated with the invasion of Sicily, now planned for the spring.[8] The twelve destroyers which the First Sea Lord had asked for[9] were simply 'not available'.[10] Admiral Pound, in these circumstances, proscribed an Arctic convoy cycle of twenty-seven days. The Home Fleet, he said, with its present resources, was

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1 Roskill, II, p. 290.
2 FNP to Pres, 17 Nov. 1942, Pres to FNP, 19 Nov. 1942, PREM 3 393/7.
3 PM to Premier Stalin, T.1584/2, 24 Nov. 1942, ADM 205/14.
4 Premier Stalin to Premier Churchill, T.1608/2, 27 Nov. 1942, PREM 3 393/5.
5 Admy (1st SL) to N.X.C.F., 481, 29 Nov. 1942, AIR 20/4986.
6 Roskill, II, p. 398.
7 GEN/1/1st mtg, 5 Jan. 1943, PREM 3 393/8.
8 ANFA 3rd mtg, 23 Jan. 1943, CAB 99/24.
9 CCS 58th mtg, min. 3, 16 Jan. 1943, CAB 99/24.
10 ANFA 3rd mtg, loc. cit.

simply inadequate for the hazardous task.[1] Reluctantly his colleagues - both British and American - endorsed his conclusion. Despite their agreement that 'The Soviet forces must be sustained by the greatest volume of supplies that can be transported to Russia without a prohibitive cost of shipping',[2] they were bound by the necessity to conserve their own resources. Allied shipping losses had reached 7,790,697 tons in 1942, and the rate of new shipbuilding - 7 million tons - had not kept pace with this. German U-boats meanwhile had increased from 91 to 212 in the past year and were still appearing more quickly than the Allies could destroy them.[3] In these circumstances it was agreed that the heavy losses of the northern route in 1942 could not be repeated. As General Marshall said, they would cripple the Allies' offensive in 1943.[4] The suggestion was made - by Harry Hopkins - that the convoys be abandoned altogether in favour of the Persian Gulf and a larger offer of aircraft; but this was rejected by Churchill and Roosevelt. Instead it was agreed to set the convoy cycle at thirty ships every 40-42 days.[5] This, it was calculated, would bring protocol shipments up to date by the end of 1943,[6] but the proviso was added that losses on the northern route must not be 'prohibitive' and shipping losses generally must not exceed 2.4 per cent.[7]

Even with this decision the difficulties on the northern route continued. Owing to a combination of accidents, labour disputes and engine failures, the January convoy was reduced from twenty ships to fourteen.[8] Even then the British encountered problems in finding enough high priority cargo for the ships allotted to them. All but two of the British and American ships which had been waiting in Iceland during the autumn had sailed in the December convoy,[9] and the British, in accordance with an A.S.E. decision of the 9 October 1942, had kept no more than one month's stock of

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1 CCS 58th mtg, loc. cit.
2 Howard, appendix III (D), p. 621.
3 Ibid., p. 259.
4 CCS 60th mtg, min. 3, 18 Jan. 1943, CAB 99/24.
5 ANFA 3rd mtg, loc. cit; MWT to CSAB W'ton, SABLO 161 MOSSY, 3 Feb. 1943, MT 59/1120.
6 R. M. Leighton and P. W. Coakley, Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943-1945 (Washington, 1968), p. 673.
7 Howard, appendix III (F), p. 625. If losses were higher than this, the protocol could only be fulfilled by diversions of shipping from 'Bolero' (ibid., pp. 260-1).
8 Howard, p. 331.
9 WM(42) 169th concl., min. 3, confidential annex, 15 Dec. 1942, CAB 65/32.

protocol supplies in reserve.[1] The backlog which had accumulated in theory, therefore, was not readily available for shipment, and the search for high priority cargoes was complicated by the Russians refusing to accept either British artillery, British anti-tank rifles or British tanks with 2-pounder guns.[2] The anti-tank guns, the Soviet Military Mission and Trade Delegation told the War Office on 23 November, 'did not prove to be from the point of view of their ballistic properties, penetration and constructive qualities, in line with up-to-date requirements as it is expected from anti-tank guns at the Soviet-German front.'[3] The situation therefore arose, when the convoy cycle was lengthened to forty days, of the War Office being unable to provide enough cargo to fill the number of ships which for political reasons it had been desirable to promise. In February in fact the Ministry of War Transport had to ask the Americans to provide an extra five ships for the March convoy at short notice.[4]

To these problems were soon added others, less technical but far more serious. The January convoy had an uneventful sailing, but in February the hours of daylight began to increase rapidly and the threat of surface, air and submarine attack on the scale of the previous spring became real. To meet this threat the Admiralty began making plans, amongst them the sending of air squadrons to north Russia again, but their preparations brought them into conflict with the Russians. So serious was the crisis which then developed that it, rather than any dangers on the route, almost brought the convoy cycle to an end.

It did this largely because this crisis between the British and the Russians, although the most serious, was certainly not the first of its kind. Rather it was the climax to twelve months of Anglo-Soviet friction in the ports of north Russia, and even longer dissension over the question of the number of British units in the Soviet Union. The Russians, as mentioned earlier, had made it clear throughout 1941 and 1942 that they resented the presence of large numbers of British servicemen in their country. Early in 1942 they started raising objections to renewing or granting visas for any

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1 ASE(42) 20th mtg, min. 2, 9 Oct. 1942, CAB 92/2.
2 WP(43) 475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42; WM(42) 169th concl., loc. cit.
3 ASE to W'ton, no. 9 MOSSY, 23 Nov. 1942, FO 371 32878 N5888/1/38.
4 MWT to Br Merchant Shipping Mission, W'ton, LIMIT BULGE no. 2603, 9 Feb. 1943, MT 59/80.

replacements. They argued that there were enough Britons in the Soviet Union already[1] and implied that it was their prerogative to determine the size of any future admissions. The British disagreed strongly. To their mind the Russians were not providing adequate protection for the convoys in the north and consequently it was not their place to limit the number of Britons sent to do so. Obviously this argument did not flatter the Russians and it impressed them even less when the convoys ceased in July 1942.

From then on their attitude hardened perceptibly.[2] It relaxed only at times of political accord[3] or military success;[4] at other times many vexatious formalities were introduced in the ports of Archangel and Murmansk. The Russian authorities restricted the movement of British personnel from ship to shore and even from ship to ship; they obstructed the landing of stores; and censored personal mail rigidly and slowly. In a particularly callous incident, which drove the British to fury, they even refused permission to land to a hospital unit sent to treat convoy casualties.[5] Undoubtedly in some of these incidents the British were not entirely without blame - the American chargé d'affaires thought the friction was 'in large measure causedby the failure of British personnel to study to avoid (sic) unnecessarily injuring Soviet susceptibilities'[6] - but attitudes in London soured nonetheless. The C.I.G.S. (never the most enthusiastic about the Russian commitment) complained at Casablanca of Russian secrecy and suspicion. 'One unsatisfactory feature of the whole business of supplying Russia', he said, 'was their refusal to put their cards on the table. It might well be that we were straining ourselves unduly and taking great risks when there was no real necessity to do so.'[7] Churchill, too, was increasingly provoked by the Russians' hostile attitude and declared when Maisky agitatedly complained to Eden at the small size of the January convoy:

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1 FO to Kuibyshev, no. 276, 27 Feb. 1942, FO 371 32898 N1107/23/38.
2 30 Mission to AM, AIR 454, 5 Aug. 1942, AIR 19/291.
3 A. Birse, Memoirs of an Interpreter (London, 1967), p. 93.
4 War Diary entry by 30 MM, 17 Nov. 1942, WO 178/26.
5 COS(43)204, 21 July 1943, CAB 80/41; Roskill, II, p. 279. Admiral Geoffrey Miles, head of number 30 Military Mission at this time, still recalled this incident with considerable annoyance in an interview with the author in December 1972.
6 FRUS, 1942, III, pp. 756-7.
7 CCS 58th mtg, min. 3, 16 Jan. 1943, CAB 99/24.

> (Maisky) is not telling the truth when he says I promised Stalin convoys of thirty ships in January and February . . . Maisky should be told that I am getting to the end of my tether with these repeated Russian naggings and that there is not the slightest use trying to knock me about any more.[1]

The breaking-point came in the crisis of February 1943. Fearing the dangers of the summer convoys, the Admiralty and Air Ministry decided to send two squadrons of Hampden torpedo bombers to north Russia as they had for PQ 18.[2] The Russians accepted this offer, and personnel for the force was already on its way, when the Soviet Deputy Chief of Naval Staff announced on 20 February that the squadrons would have to be under Soviet operational control.[3] The Chiefs of Staff refused to accept this. The head of number 30 Mission, Miles, believed that the Russians would not concentrate the planes on the German surface forces,[4] for when the Admiralty had called on them in January to attack the Lützow and the Scheer with the bombers remaining from the PQ 18 force,[5] the Russians had not responded.[6] On this score, therefore, the British had reservations. These soon turned to fury when with amazing irrationality and peremptoriness, the Russian authorities in Murmansk closed down special radio equipment used for interfering with enemy signals giving the position of Allied convoys. Furthermore they insisted that two of the four wireless transmitters at Polyarnoe and three wireless transmitters at Archangel should also be closed down.[7] With these actions, Miles said, the Russians had 'passed the bounds of mere irritation and are prejudicing the safety and operational control of our convoys',[8]

Such meaningless obstruction the Chiefs of Staff would not tolerate. Pound called it 'another example of the unjustifiable suspicion, lack of co-operation and intolerable interference on the part of the Russians', and his colleagues were 'firmly in agreement that the time had come for strong representations to the Russians regarding their general lack of co-operation and mistrust of or interference with actions taken by us for the sole purpose of

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1 Minute PM to FS, 1st L and 1st SL, M.20/3, 9 Jan. 1943, ADM 205/27.
2 ACAS(Ops) to SOS, 11 Jan. 1943, AIR 20/4987.
3 Telegram from Air Mission, AIR 277, 20 Feb. 1943, AIR 8/672.
4 Telegram from Miles no. 201, 23 Feb. 1943, FO 371 36989 N1209/408/38.
5 Since the return flight of these planes was considered too hazardous, it had been decided to hand them over to the Russians (COS(42) 283rd mtg, min. 5, 8 Oct. 1942, WO 193/669).
6 CCS 59th mtg, min. 3, 17 Jan. 1943, CAB 99/24.
7 SBNO, N Ra, to Admy and Miles, 770, 23 Feb. 1943, AIR 8/672.
8 Adm. Miles to Admy, 205, 24 Feb. 1943, MT 59/80.

assisting them.'[1] The Chiefs of Staff had been exasperated with the Russians many times before, but this time the Cabinet supported them. On 24 February Maisky proposed that the whole operation be abandoned and the aircraft given to the Soviet forces instead;[2] the Cabinet instructed Eden the next day to tell the Russian representatives that the British government would be forced to review the whole question of continuing convoys if facilities for the British air force, 'Grenadine', were withheld.[3]

When the Foreign Secretary told Maisky this, and the British ambassador in Moscow approached Molotov also, the Russians gave way a little. Perhaps they were impressed by the statistics Eden gave Maisky of the losses the Allies had suffered so far on the northern convoys - 1,000 officers and men of the Royal Navy; over 500 officers and men of the merchant navy; 2 cruisers; 10 destroyers; 6 other warships; and 74 merchant ships. In a written answer of 4 March the Soviet government admitted there were grounds for change on the question of the radio equipment and transmitters; but it maintained its objections to the 'Grenadine' force and entered a long argument about the minor acts of obstruction in the northern ports.[4] The Russians had given enough ground, however, for the British to relent. Churchill's idea of cancelling the March convoy and giving the Russians ten ships, without crews but with escorts to Bear Island, to carry the supplies themselves, was abandoned. The Chiefs of Staff, who felt some obligation to the Soviet Union in view of the regrettable shipping clause in the second protocol, agreed to let JW 54 sail. It had never been intended that 'Grenadine' should protect this convoy, and there would be time enough, they argued, to make a stand before the summer convoys sailed.[5]

They soon changed their minds however. On 11 March the Tirpitz moved from Trondheim to Altenfjord north of Narvik and the Lützow, the Scharnhorst, a cruiser and eight destroyers joined it there. This was the most powerful enemy concentration yet seen in the far north,[6] and it threatened the convoys in a way

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1 COS(43) 46th mtg, min. 2, 22 Feb. 1943, WO 193/669.
2 AM to 30 MM, OZ 584, 26 Feb. 1943, ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Woodward, II, pp. 566-7.
5 COS comments on PM's draft telegram to Stalin, 5 Mar. 1943, FO 371 39689/N1359/408/38.
6 Roskill, II, p. 400.

that allied friction had not. The Admiralty believed that the German vessels would be used offensively by Admiral Doenitz who had replaced Grand Admiral Raeder as Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy in January.[1] If they were, convoys with escorts even on the scale of the previous spring and summer would be powerless. Only the battle fleet could offer protection in the Barents Sea;[2] but the Admiralty had always opposed sending the fleet east of Bear Island in the past, and in March 1943 it had additional reasons for resisting this. This was the month that Doenitz's U-boat campaign in the Atlantic reached its peak. The losses of allied merchant shipping were more than double those of January.[3] The fear of a German breakout into the Atlantic loomed large. The First Sea Lord told the First Lord of the Admiralty on 15 March that, even if the Tirpitz moved to the Baltic, he would support a northern convoy only

> if the political reasons for doing so are so great that it is justifiable to accept the possibility of losing a battleship of the K.G.V. Class when the latter was being used in an unsound manner, e.g. in range of shore-based air attack, and in face of a U-boat concentration, without fighter protection and after a time without A/S (sic) escort.[4]

The next day Pound advised the Defence Committee to cancel the Arctic convoy planned for March. Already, he said, the Navy had run twenty-three convoys 'in circumstances which had never justified their sailing'. Not unexpectedly Churchill protested. JW 54 should sail, he argued, 'as a bait to draw out the enemy fleet'; it should 'tease the enemy and keep them in suspense' and return to Iceland if it failed to entice the enemy into action by the time it reached Bear Island. The Defence Committee agreed,[5] but soon came news that changed this decision. In the next two days approximately twenty ships were sunk; on 18 March the Cabinet was forced to agree that 'the advantage would lie in discontinuing convoys to North Russia for the present, and concentrating all available escort forces on protecting the Atlantic convoys.'[6]

This was a painful decision. Not only did it mean the cancellation of this one convoy, but also the cessation of all supplies

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1 Mtg in 1st SL's room, 5 Feb. 1942, ADM 205/32.
2 Roskill, II, p. 400.
3 Morison, I, appendix 1/3.
4 COS(43) 46th mtg, annex, CAB 79/59.
5 DO(43) 3rd mtg, 16 Mar. 1943, CAB 69/5.
6 WM(43) 42nd concl., conf. annex, 18 Mar. 1942, CAB 65/37.

via the northern route until September; for the invasion of Sicily was planned for early summer 1943 and, like 'Torch', had prior claim on all available escorts. The time could scarcely have been worse to break the news to Stalin, since on 15 March the Soviet army, exhausted by its victorious advance from Stalingrad, had lost Kharkov again to the Wehrmacht. On the same day Stalin, anxious since the Casablanca meeting about his allies' plans for 1943, wrote to Churchill saying; 'I deem it my duty to warn you in the strongest possible manner how dangerous would be from the view-point of our common cause further delay in the opening of the Second Front in France.'[1] Such delay, however, the Allies had known for months, was inevitable after their decision to launch 'Torch',[2] and now they were forced to cancel the convoys as well. Churchill broke the news to Stalin on 30 March. He assured him that the convoys would be re-started early in September if enemy dispositions and the Atlantic situation allowed. Stalin answered on 6 April.

> I understand this unexpected action as a catastrophic diminution of supplies of arms and military raw materials to the U.S.S.R. on the part of Great Britain and the United States of America, as transport via Pacific is limited by the tonnage and not reliable and the Southern route has a small transit capacity. . . . . the circumstances cannot fail to affect the position of the Soviet troops.[3]

This was a 'bleak' answer,[4] but Churchill was relieved. 'In the circumstances', he thought it 'courageous and not unsatisfactory'.[5] In fact, as Cadogan recorded in his diary, the Prime Minister was 'delighted with it'.[6]

Fortunately for the British relations with the Kremlin were about to enter an unusually congenial time, and this perhaps conditioned Stalin's response. From March onwards the Russians made a conspicuous effort to meet the charge made publicly by the U.S. ambassador on the 8th of that month that they were ungrateful for and silent about Lend-Lease supplies.[7] The Soviet press published statistics of Allied aid[8] and on the 20 April Maisky bestowed Soviet decorations on officers of the Royal and merchant navies with the

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1 Churchill, IV, p. 672.
2 See Howard, p. xxiii, ch. XI.
3 Churchill, pp. 675-7.
4 Woodward, II, p. 569.
5 WM(43) 48th concl., min. 2, 5 Apr. 1943, CAB 65/38.
6 Cadogan, Diaries, p. 518.
7 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, III (Washington, 1963), pp. 631-2.
8 Ibid., pp. 638n, 639.

words:

> These northern convoys played, and are playing, a very important part in the history of the war. They helped the Soviet Union in the most difficult moments of the past, they greatly contributed to the recent events in the East. Let me, on behalf of the Soviet Government, the Red Army and the whole Soviet people express our most sincere gratitude to your Royal Navy, to your Merchant Navy, to your gallant seamen . . .[1]

Politically too, despite the furore over the discovery of the bodies of 4,510 Polish officers and men near Katyn, and the resulting breach in Russo-Polish relations,[2] the Kremlin showed signs of being more forthcoming. Stalin's speech on May 1 was full of glowing praise for 'the victorious troops of our Allies' in Tunisia and 'the valiant Anglo-American air forces' who were striking 'crushing blows at the military-industrial centres of Germany and Italy'.[3] This was in startling contrast to his Red Army Day Order of 23 February which had not even mentioned the Allies.[4] Later in May and June the Soviet press gave unprecedented coverage to the anniversaries of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty and the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Master Lend-Lease Agreement.[5] Then, on 22 May, the Kremlin made a unique gesture to the West; it abolished the Communist International. Whatever the reasons for this change of heart - anticipation of a second front, confidence from the Red Army's victories, or pleasure at the West's overtures on questions of post-war co-operation[6] - doubtless it conditioned Stalin's response. The bitterness of July 1942 was lacking in his reply of 9 April - as indeed was the crisis in production and on the battlefield which had inspired it.

But if the political ramifications of cancelling the convoys were not serious, the effects on the fulfilment of the protocol were. Thirty-four ships had been loaded to sail for north Russia in March[7] and there was no means of re-shipping all their cargoes.

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1 Soviet War News (published by Soviet embassy, London), FO 371 36989 N2497/408/38.
2 See Woodward, II, pp. 625-7; Werth, Russia at War, pp. 598-604 (for discussion of the evidence suggesting Soviet responsibility for these murders).
3 FRUS, 1942, III, p. 519.
4 Vojtech,Mastny, 'Stalin and the Prospects of a Separate Peace', American Historical Review, vol. 77, no. 5 (Dec. 1972), p. 1373.
5 Werth, p. 610.
6 Woodward, II, pp. 550-3. Maisky expressed gratitude to Eden for being taken into the British confidence about the Foreign Secretary's talks in Washington in March (Eden to Sir. A. Clark Kerr, no. 168, 19 Apr. 1943, FO 371 36955 N2456/66/38).
7 Donaldson to FS, 8 Apr. 1943, FO 371 36933 N2344/45/38.

Naturally Maisky suggested that all ships be re-routed, the twenty-four American vessels to Vladivostock and the ten British to the Persian Gulf;[1] but this proved impossible. The Persian Gulf was congested through the flooding of roads and the railway near Khorramshahr, and was fully occupied with supplies from the United States.[2] It could take only seven of JW 54's ships, those carrying high priority aircraft, tanks and explosives.[3] The Pacific route took a further eight shipments of sisal rope, R.A.F. spare parts and machinery made to Russian specifications.[4] Two additional shipments to assembly plants in Gibraltar and Egypt cleared the 435 aircraft on Britain's account in this and the succeeding convoy.[5] The remaining cargoes, however, were unloaded onto British docks.[6]

The effects of this were predictable. Arrears in protocol shipments had already been large and with this crisis they naturally grew larger. By the end of the protocol period, 30 June 1943, only 2,972, 000 short tons of supplies had been shipped. Of these a mere 307,100 short tons were from the United Kingdom and the Empire, while 2,664,900 short tons were from the United States. The combined total was far less than the 4.4 million short tons promised in June 1942.[7] In the case of the United States the shortfall was most serious in lorries - 94, 047 were shipped instead of 120,000 - and in items of signals equipment like radar.[8] U.S. aircraft deliveries also, though met in terms of the number despatched by sea and by the Atlantic and Alaskan ferry routes,[9] were cut by the delays in assembly at Iran. (Backlogs at Abadan were more than 600 by August 1943.)[10]

Britain for her part sent 2,195 fighters towards her commitment of 2,400, and a further 249 aircraft in addition to this.[11] Many

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1 Donaldson to FS, 8 Apr. 1943, BT 28/144, SEC/12/1.
2 Ibid.
3 Donaldson to Cadogan, 4 June 1943, FO 371 36989 N3346/498/38.
4 ASE(43)46, 9 May 1943, CAB 92/6.
5 AM Whitehall to RAFDEL, W'ton, WEBBER.744, 30 Apr. 1943, AIR 8/1061.
6 Donaldson to FS, 8 Apr. 1943, BT 28/144. This included an extra sixty 40-mm cannon Hurricanes which Churchill offered Stalin, presumably in compensation for cancellation of the convoys, on 10 April (PM to Stalin, T.491/3, PREM 3 401/16).
7 WP(43)475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42.
8 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 595-6. The lorry situation was aggravated by a disastrous fire at Khorramshahr in May 1943 which destroyed hundreds of vehicles awaiting assembly (Motter, p. 152).
9 Leighton and Coakley, p. 596.
10 Motter, p. 269.
11 WP(43)475, loc. cit. Howard gives the figure of 2,184 aircraft (p. 332). The figure of 2,195 is taken from a report by the chairman of the A.S.E. which post-dates the references used by Howard. The 249 extra-protocol aircraft were made up of 150 Spitfires (Oct. 1942), 25 Hampdens (PQ 18 protection force), 14 Albemarles and 60 Hurricane II.D's (April 1943).

of the protocol offerings, however, were obsolescent Hurricanes and Kittyhawks,[1] and 285 of them were caught in the congestion at Abadan.[2] In tanks and Bren carriers also Britain disappointed the Russians. Committed to supply 3,000 of the former and 2,400 of the latter, she shipped only 1,719 and 146 respectively. In naval supplies and general ammunition her performance was better, and there was also her contribution of some thirteen items of raw materials, including 12,000 tons of aluminium. To set against this, though, was the Russian refusal to accept British artillery.[3]

Not all of Britain's failures were due to the interruptions in the northern convoys. Some were failures of production and design, some the reflection of increasing Russian discrimination. British tank production, for instance, declined at the end of 1942[4] at the very time that the Russians began to be more critical. As their attitude to British artillery showed, the Russians were no longer impressed with two-pounder tanks,[5] and two-pounder Matildas particularly, which were obsolescent in 1941,[6] no longer met their needs. Nor did the Crusader, which the War Office, despite the tank's reputation for vulnerability, unreliability and 'rather weak armouring' hopefully offered the Russians in March 1943.[7] With their own production of superior tanks, the T-34 and the KV-1, expanding, the Russians could afford to be selective. From late in 1942 they wanted six-pounder tanks from Britain,[8] and after February 1943, few tanks at all from the Americans,[9] whose rate of spare parts they thought less generous than the British.[10] This change of mind, understandable though it was, disrupted Allied planning.

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1 ASE(43)41, 1 May 1943, CAB 92/6.
2 Motter, p. 265.
3 WP(43)475, loc. cit.
4 They were converting to production of Cromwell, Centaur and Cavalier tanks (such 'change-overs' usually disrupted production for approximately six months), and were re-working other models of British tanks (minute by Minister for Supply, 9 Nov. 1942, PREM 3 426/15; paper by DCIGS, 16 Dec. 1942, WO 32/10521).
5 Memorandum by Director of Armoured Fighting Vehicles(DAFV) on the tank situation, 7 Feb. 1943, WO 193/540.
6 C. Ellis and P. Chamberlain, Fighting Vehicles (England, 1972), p. 95.
7 Letter from Borisenko (head of the Soviet Trade Delegation) to Brigadier Firebrace (in charge of the War Office's Russian Liaison Group), 22 Mar. 1943, WO 32/10521.
8 Letter Grigg to Eden, 8 Dec. 1942, WO 32/10521. Britain produced 353 six-pounder tanks in December 1942, of which 115 were despatched in PQ 20 (ASE(42)204, 12 Dec. 1942, CAB 92/4).
9 ASE(43)53, 26 May 1943, CAB 92/6.
10 Extract from 23rd mtg of British Supply Council (W'ton), 9 June 1943, WO 193/669.

Notwithstanding this, it cannot be denied that what confounded Allied expectations most was the failure of the northern route. The statistics show this clearly. Relied upon to handle 3.3 million short tons of second protocol supplies, the northern convoys carried little more than one-tenth of this, 344,200 short tons.[1] Only 36 of the 64 ships proposed for the northern route from the United States in the first six months of 1943 in fact sailed. Twenty-nine more U.S. ships discharged their cargo in the British Isles.[2] This failure could not be rectified by the other routes. The Persian Gulf carried only 1,068,000 short tons, which together with the 42,200 short tons conveyed on the overland route from India,[3] exceeded the 1.1 million short tons at first assigned to it. But this fell far short of the 200,000 tons per month aimed at in the crisis-ridden days of July 1942. Such a target was still, despite the efforts of the Americans under Major General Donald H. Connally, out of Allied reach. Although Roosevelt in October 1942 had diverted men, rolling stock and shipping - even from 'Bolero' - to the Persian Gulf project,[4] inland clearance there had not kept pace with the capacity of the ports. Equipment and troops to develop the route had not arrived on schedule[5] and congestion in the Persian ports had grown formidably.[6] Late in 1942 it had even proved necessary to divert cargoes from the Persian ports to Karachi.[7] Not until the spring of 1943 did a rapid expansion in capacity occur, and the objective of 200,000 tons was not attained until the following September.[8] In 1942 meanwhile the total tonnage carried for the Soviet army amounted to a meagre 350,000 tons.[9]

The Pacific route also had its limitations, particularly as far as the British were concerned. Admittedly it confounded Allied expectations which had deemed it unreliable in May 1942, and carried in this protocol period the largest volume of supplies, 1,517,000 short tons.[10] Much of this tonnage moreover was petroleum and

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1 WP(43)475, loc. cit.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 590. These supplies were treated as Britain's on ordinary Lend-Lease terms (letter P. Reed (of Harriman mission) to W. G. Fergusson of MOP, 4 June 1943, BT 28/144, SEC/12/16).
3 WP(43)475, loc. cit.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 578.
5 Ibid., pp. 579-81.
6 Motter, The Persian Corridor, pp. 407-8.
7 MWT to British Merchant Shipping Mission, W'ton, MASTA 4240, 22 Nov. 1942, MT 59/79.
8 Howard, p. 47.
9 Motter, p. 183.
10 WP(43)475, loc. cit. This was made possible by the transfer of 53 cargo ships and 6 tankers from U.S. to Soviet flag from October 1942 to June 1943 (Leighton and Coakley, p. 591).

food to which the Russians gave increasing priority.[1] But the route was still restricted by the Russians' slow rate of turn-around,[2] and was limited also, through fear of Japanese protests, to 'civil' supplies only (though in time of total war these were difficult to define). Obviously also from the British point of view the Pacific route could not fill the void left by the northern convoys. The supplies which came from Canada for the Russians were assigned to the United States' western seaboard; while the major item the Americans provided on the United Kingdom's account - aircraft - was delivered not by the Pacific route but through Alaska, Iran and the ill-fated convoys to the north.[3]

Consequently the British found themselves unable to meet their commitments under the second protocol programme. As they had suspected in May and June 1942, the problems of delivery and their own demands on shipping had conflicted irreconcilably with the Russian demands. Unfortunately this meant that much of the political and military value of what the British - and Americans - did achieve was diminished. For, considerable though their achievements and sacrifices were, they seemed poor in contrast to the promises which had been made. Furthermore, the irregularity with which they delivered the munitions to the Soviet Union must have disrupted Soviet planning, particularly in the critical months of late 1942. At this time, when the Russians' need was greatest, the assistance from the Allies, thanks to the problems of the supply routes, was at its most uncertain. Not until the end of the second protocol period, when the Russian crisis had ebbed, did those promises of massive aid, made so optimistically in 1942, become at all attainable.

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 586.
2 Ibid.
3 ASE(43)41, loc. cit.

MILITARY SUPPLIES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM - THE SECOND PROTOCOL*

	Second Protocol Commitment	Made Available	Shipped	Remarks
Aircraft -				
Hurricane	) 2,400	943	943	154 Airacobras unshipped but booked from U.S.A. Backlog of 51 Hurricanes to be made good.
Airacobra	) Fighters	1,106	952	
Kittyhawk	)	300	300	
		2,349	2,195	
Tanks -				
Valentine	)	499	499	197 Valentines unshipped but booked from Canada. 10 Canadian Valentines off-loaded in United Kingdom await shipment to U.S.S.R. Backlog of 1,074 cancelled as superseded by Third Protocol offer.
Matilda	) 3,000 Tanks	332	332	
Churchill	)	271	271	
Valentine (Canadian)	)	824	617	
		1,926	1,719	
Bren Carriers	2,400	2,385	146	On 14th June, 1943 2,233 carriers awaited shipment from Canada. U.S.S.R. have agreed that all should be repossessed with exception of a pool of 400. 6 carriers off-loaded in United Kingdom.
A/T Guns - 2-pdrs.	600	174	174	Cancelled by U.S.S.R. 11th November, 1942.
A/T Guns - 6-pdrs.	600	100	100	
A/T Rifles - Boys	3,600	1,150	1,150	Cancelled by U.S.S.R. 9th January 1943.
Ammunition	-	-	-	Shipped with weapons at full scales.
Naval Supplies - 130-mm. Vickers Naval guns with locks and spare barrels	50	50	40	10 awaiting shipment from United Kingdom.
Asdics for ships	45	51	46	5 awaiting shipment from United Kingdom towards making good loss of 6.

	Second Protocol Commitment	Made Available	Shipped	Remarks
Storage batteries for Submarines	32 during First and Second Protocol periods	42	40	Shipped includes 5 fitted in United Kingdom and 6 lost. 2 batteries await shipment and 2 more are awaiting completion in United Kingdom. 13 were shipped during First Protocol period.

* Source: 'Report on the Implementation of the Second Soviet Protocol . . .', by O. Lyttelton, WP(43)475, 25 October 1943, CAB 66/42.

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The third Soviet supply protocol, covering the year from 1 July 1943 to 30 June 1944, was the culmination of all that had preceded it. In this period the many efforts of 1941 and 1942 finally came to fruition. The supply routes at last reached the targets which had been set for them; the agencies of procurement worked with efficiency and ease; the supply of munitions became increasingly abundant; and the Kremlin at last responded to the overtures of the West. As a result the Allies provided aid that was generous and uninterrupted and these years saw the greatest amity of the wartime coalition.

Only the fact that the anomalies of the past protocols continued made this achievement possible; for even though the Russians' need for munitions was far less in this period than before, in accordance with past policy the Kremlin was not asked to justify its needs. The Allies continued to give the Soviet Union the maximum quantity of supplies they could provide and ship. Motivated again by political considerations and the changing character of Soviet needs, they ignored the change of fortunes on the Eastern front and made no attempt to base the protocols on rational, statistical planning.

This is not surprising, given the central place Russian resistance occupied in Allied strategy for 1943. At the Casablanca conference in January it was universally agreed that the Soviet war effort was vital to Allied planning both for Europe and for Asia. There was no one who disputed, despite the Anglo-American victories in north Africa, that the Red Army was 'the greatest single drain on the power and hope of Germany'.[1] It still in mid-1943 contained 216 Axis divisions compared to 103 in southern Europe and 71 north of the Alps.[2] This in moral terms alone gave the Russians a compelling claim on Allied munitions and resources. To add to this there were strong arguments, military and political, for continuing to offer aid to the Russians. The Red Army, despite its great resurgence, was still in need of certain kinds of assistance which the United States could provide. It had shed its incompetent generals and had replaced them with dynamic young

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1 COS(42)466(O), 31 Dec. 1942, quoted in Howard, p. 602.
2 J. Ehrman, Grand Strategy, vol. V, August 1943 - September 1944 (London: HMSO, 1956), p. 53.

leadership; it had dispensed with its dual command system of officers and commissars and showed growing innovation in tactics;[1] it was increasingly superior to the Wehrmacht in armaments as well as men.[2] But it was still quite clearly inferior to the Germans in mobility and technical skills. The fact that General Erich von Manstein had been able to stabilize the German line even after Stalingrad[3] with divisions well below establishment showed this clearly. In February 1943 the British Chiefs of Staff would not predict 'with confidence' what the outcome of the summer fighting on the Eastern front would be.[4] In a purely military sense, therefore, there was still a place for Allied aid.

Politically also, it was of cardinal importance to prevent the Russians from feeling abandoned by the West. They still had the option open to them of negotiating a peace with Germany on reaching their former boundaries, and the signs that they might be tempted to do so were not encouraging when the third protocol was being considered. Stalin conspicuously failed to associate himself with Churchill and Roosevelt's demand at Casablanca for Germany's 'unconditional surrender'.[5] He made it clear in the following months that the consequences of the Allies postponing their invasion of the Continent until 1944 — as in fact they had decided to do — would be dire.[6] In these circumstances it seemed provocative to reduce or even attach rigorous conditions to the aid which it cost the Allies comparatively little to send. Russian demands, moreover, seemed generally reasonable in 1943 and 1944, in that they concentrated on the need for mobility and on reconstruction and rehabilitation of liberated territories. The necessity for these supplies was as obvious in these years as the want of munitions had been earlier. Consequently, there was little opposition, even from previous critics in Washington and London, to the continuance of military aid within the limitations imposed by shipping.

Such opposition as there was during the preparation of the third protocol, moreover, was not fundamental or influential. In the United States where, because of the size of the commitment, there

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1 Report by Colonel Pika, 11 Mar. 1943, FO 371 36958 N1539/75/38. British intelligence sources confirmed Col. Pika's information.
2 JIC(43) 171(Revise), 28 Apr. 1943, CAB 79/60.
3 B. H. Liddell Hart, History of the Second World War, p. 510.
4 COS(43)55, 22 Feb. 1943, CAB 80/39.
5 VOJtech Mastny, 'Stalin and the Prospects of a Separate Peace', p. 1374.
6 See Howard, Grand Strategy, pp. 327-30, for Russian agitation after Casablanca about the second front.

was more disquiet about the policy than in Great Britain, criticism tended to be limited to circles with little control over policy making and to be concerned with unrealistic conditions to be attached to the protocol. The most common argument, for instance, was that supplies should be made conditional on greater Russian co-operation in the exchange of military and technical information. Americans, both in Washington and Moscow, had finally come to share the annoyance of the British military mission at the Russians' refusal to take them into their confidence. The Operations Division's Policy Committee of the War Department argued when the issue of the third protocol was first raised in January 1943 that

> the United States should continue to furnish Lend-Lease supplies to the extent of our capacity, provided - and only provided - that Russia cooperates with us and takes us into her confidence. As we grow more powerful . . . we can afford to, and in simple self-interest must start exercising the dominant influence to which such power properly entitles us. The time is appropriate for us to start some straight-from-the-shoulder talk to a Mr. Joseph Stalin.[1]

The White House, however, was not sympathetic to this approach. The President still took the view that uncritical generosity was the wiser policy, and in his directive of 6 January on the future of Soviet supplies, he said:

> I understand that both the Army and Navy are definitely of the opinion that Russian resistance as a major factor in the war is of cardinal importance and therefore it must be a basic factor of our strategy to provide her with the maximum amount of supplies that can be delivered to her ports. I fully endorse this concept.[2]

Roosevelt would not consider the War Department's suggestion or any other which introduced an element of bargaining into the protocol. The Chief of Staff, Marshall, agreed with the President this year, and told the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 22 May that he felt it would be unwise to press the Russians to abandon the reserve which characterized their relations with their allies. The insistence on reciprocal facilities was therefore quietly dropped from the draft agreement for the third protocol presented to the Russians.[3]

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1 M. Matloff and E. M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944 (Washington, 1959), p. 282.
2 Ibid., p. 281.
3 Ibid., pp. 282-3.

In the same way the argument that the United States should use its largesse to wrest political concessions from the Russians was never seriously entertained. There were undoubtedly some who thought it should, in view of the fact that before the end of the war the Red Army would in all likelihood have occupied much of Eastern Europe. Its potential power in these countries would be great and could well be used in ways incompatible with Western democratic aspirations. Already on the question of Poland, for instance, the Kremlin was taking an apparently sinister line, declaring on 16 January 1943 that henceforward all persons of Polish race who had been resident in the territory occupied by the Red Army in 1939 were Soviet citizens.[1] This implied pre-judgement of the question of post-war boundaries and, together with other manifestations of Soviet hostility to representatives of pre-war Poland,[2] caused disquiet in the West. Admittedly the extent and depth of this concern was unclear, but it was certainly significant enough at the time of the Congressional debates on the extension of Lend-Lease aid to cause the U.S. administration anxiety. Hull confided in Eden during the Foreign Secretary's visit to Washington in March 1943 that

> Many people here are stating that Russia is saying almost nothing about her future plans and purposes, and that, at the end of the war, Russia will do as she pleases, take what she pleases, and confer with nobody. The same people add that this Government is spending many billions of dollars in supplying Russia and Britain with immense military supplies . . .

He confessed that he feared it might prove 'difficult, if hostilities continue for some time, to prevail upon the American people to continue to furnish supplies to Russia' unless 'Russia shows some appreciation and speaks out in a spirit of teamwork and co-operation more fully both now and especially after the war'.[3]

The same kind of anxiety in the War Department prompted the U.S. ambassador's outburst in Moscow at this time.[4] At a press conference on 8 March Admiral Standley complained that 'The Soviet authorities seem to be endeavoring (sic) to create the impression

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1 Woodward, British Foreign Policy, II, p. 618. Until this date the Soviet government had claimed as Soviet citizens only persons of other races resident in eastern Poland in 1939 (ibid., p. 616).
2 Ibid., p. 619.
3 Hull, Memoirs, p. 1248.
4 Standley and Ageton, Admiral Ambassador to Russia, p. 333.

at home as well as abroad that they are fighting the war alone . . . Congress is rather sensitive; it is generous and big-hearted so long as it feels that it is helping someone. But give it the idea that it is not — there might be an entirely different story.'[1] Two days later he elaborated on this in a message to the President:

> I am becoming convinced that we can only deal with them (the Russians) on a bargaining basis, for our continuing to accede freely to their requests while agreeing to pay an additional price for every small request we make seems to arouse suspicion of our motives in the Oriental mind rather than to build confidence.[2]

Standley's convictions were shared by many Allied officers who served with him in Moscow, but Roosevelt was apparently more in sympathy with the uncritical approach of Harry Hopkins and his protégé, the Lend-Lease representative in the Soviet Union, General Faymonville. They assumed that the Russians must be granted unconditionally whatever information or assistance was necessary for the waging of the war;[3] and though this meant that Standley and the U.S. military attaché, Colonel Michaela, were often by-passed in Moscow,[4] the White House deemed this the more rational approach. Obviously concessions made by the Soviet government under duress would be ephemeral, and there was little evidence that an uncompromising approach - attaching conditions to protocol supplies - would gain the sympathy of more than a small minority in either the United States or Great Britain. In the latter country, enthusiasm for the Red Army was still boundless and the day in its honour was 'celebrated throughout Britain . . . with long parades and fulsome speeches'.[5] Home Office intelligence reports declared on 19 January that 'People are beginning to run out of adjectives to express their admiration for the Russian offensive'.[6] In the United States meanwhile, although, according to Foster Rhea Dulles, opinion fluctuated in 1943 between admiration for Soviet

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1 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, III, p. 631.
2 Ibid., p. 510.
3 J. R. Deane, The Strange Alliance: The Story of American Efforts at Wartime Cooperation with Russia (London, 1947), p. 91. The White House, according to Sherwood, believed that the comments Standley made at the press conference were callous and in poor taste. Harriman, however, admitted a sneaking sympathy for Standley's view-point amongst himself and his colleagues — both British and American — in London (Standley and Ageton, p. 347).
4 Lukas, Air Force Aspects . . ., p. 186; Standley and Ageton, p. 314.
5 Calder, The People's War, p. 347. For details, see pp. 347-9.
6 HIWR, no. 120, 12-19 Jan. 1943, INFO 1/292C.

victories and misgivings as to how these victories would be used,[1] public opinion polls showed overwhelming support for undiminished aid to the Soviet Union.[2] Not surprisingly Washington did not give its ambassador permission to approach Stalin to complain about the lack of 'friendly relations', as he, Standley, had suggested he might.[3] Furthermore, no stipulations about either military or political co-operation were included in the third protocol. In fact, throughout the spring of 1943, regardless of any reservations in Washington and Moscow, planning for the protocol continued in the United States on 'substantially the same procedure and principles as were used in the formulation of the second Protocol'.[4]

In Britain, not unexpectedly, there were some objections to this. But they were no more fundamental or effective than those voiced in the United States. The argument in favour of reducing supplies from Great Britain to the Soviet Union had spent itself completely by this time. It had ceased to have any relevance in Britain's case with the passing of her own military crisis, the expansion of U.S. industry and, not the least, the reduction of Britain's role in the protocol programme. Even though there was a similar debate in the United Kingdom about the tactics to be used with the Russians — the Foreign Office generally favouring the White House's approach and the Service departments taking the harder line — [5] this did not affect the formulation of the protocol. The Chiefs of Staff were not prepared, whatever their frustrations with their ally, to take action which would jeopardize the Soviet Union's conduct of the war;[6] and no one, with even the most active imagination, could imagine Britain's small offering of munitions being effective in political blackmail. Consequently, her supply obligations continued with little change. The only reservations in London about this were concerned with the lack of Russian co-operation in the delivery of the supplies, and the practice of Great Britain and the United States presenting their offerings in separate lists.

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1 Foster Rhea Dulles, The Road to Teheran: The Story of Russia and America 1781-1943 (Princeton, 1944), p. 252.
2 Cantril (ed.), Public Opinion, p. 1162. A National Operation Research Center poll on 18 June 1943 showed 70 per cent in favour of continuing aid to the Soviet Union, 15 per cent against, 15 per cent 'Don't know'.
3 FRUS, 1943, III, pp. 511, 514.
4 ASE(43)13, 9 Feb. 1943, CAB 92/6.
5 See Beaumont, 'A Question of Diplomacy', RUSI journal, Sept. 1973.
6 Letter from Ismay to Sargent, 22 Feb. 1943, FO 371 36954 N1057/66/38.

In the latter case, the A.S.E.'s reservations stemmed from the fact that it believed that the existing system of separate lists had severe practical disabilities. It 'enables the Russians', the committee telegraphed its representatives in Washington on 7 May, 'to play one (donor) off against another and to apply separate pressure to each to make good deficits, when,,in fact, there may be an overall surplus in any given commodity.' A combined protocol offering, on the other hand, which the A.S.E. advocated, would allow a more rational allocation of supplies and would facilitate shipping problems. Since the source of supply would not be disclosed to the Russians, a combined schedule could be determined by convenience rather than by the need to make political capital.[1] The flexibility the Allies would thus gain, Lyttelton estimated, would allow them to save a whole convoy over the third protocol period.[2]

Not surprisingly the Americans did not see the advantages of this proposal. They wanted the credit, naturally enough, for the supplies which they were giving the Soviet Union, since their contribution to the third protocol was by far the largest of the three nations involved. Moreover, they believed that only separate lists would win the support of Congress and procurement agencies like the War Production Board.[3] Churchill, therefore, never one to deny the Americans any credit in the war effort, agreed that the suggestion of a combined schedule should be dropped.[4] In its place a compromise clause was inserted which laid down that the three countries, the United States, Great Britain and Canada - now an independent signatory - could reallocate the supplies in the schedules 'as they may decide between themselves in order to meet strategic, supply or shipping exigencies.'[5]

The American view also prevailed on the question of whether the protocol should be made dependent on Russian co-operation in the delivery of supplies. This was a precondition which the Service departments were keen to include. After their unhappy experiences over 'Grenadine', they attached 'considerable importance'[6] to imposing on the Russians the obligation to provide facilities for

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1 ASE to W'ton, no. 100 MOSSY, FO 371 36933 N2849/45/38 (draft in ASE(43)43, CAB 92/6.
2 ASE(43) 7th mtg, min. 3A, 10 May 1943, CAB 92/5.
3 British missions in W'ton to ASE, MOSSY 65, 11 May 1943, PREM 3 401/6.
4 ASE(43)52, 26 May 1943, CAB 92/6.
5 ASE(43)92, 21 Oct. 1943, CAB 92/7.
6 ASE to British missions in W'ton, MOSSY 116, 20 May 1943, PREM 3 401/6.

shore-based aircraft in north Russia. Furthermore, they wanted - somewhat perversely, it seems, since by now this was almost solely the responsibility of the United States - assistance from the Russians in the development of the Persian Gulf.[1] However, the President's Soviet Protocol Committee - chaired by Hopkins and composed of representatives of the War, Navy, State, Treasury and Agriculture departments, as well as the War Production Board, the Foreign Economic Administration, the War Shipping Administration and the Petroleum Administrator for War - opposed this. It felt sure that the Russians would resist this clause as much as one demanding reciprocal facilities for the allied military missions.

> In the experience of those engaged in the execution of previous Protocols (the committee ruled in May), the Soviets are very difficult to deal with on a bargaining basis, but respond most satisfactorily in performing their share of an understanding when a generous offer is made, and which does not force the Soviets into a bargaining position.[2]

It was the beginning of a long debate - still unresolved - about how to negotiate with the Kremlin. At this stage the more sanguine view that trust breeds trust prevailed, for Churchill supported the Americans. Realizing that Britain lacked the authority, while the convoys were suspended in the summer of 1943, to press the issue with the Russians, he agreed to leave it until the convoys resumed in the autumn.[3]

Consequently the third protocol, presented to the Russians for discussion on 9 June 1943[4] and signed in London on 19 October 1943, contained few more restrictive clauses than the Moscow and Washington protocols which had preceded it. Only in the 'escape clause' did the Allies protect themselves more carefully than before. As had been agreed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Casablanca, it was stipulated that the protocol commitments would be reduced if shipping losses or the necessities of other operations rendered their fulfilment prohibitive.[5] The relevant clause in the agreement stated:

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1 Letter from F. R. Hoyer Millar, W'ton, 18 May 1943, ibid.
2 Leighton and Coakley, Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943-1945, pp. 675-6.
3 Llewellin for chairman, A.S.E., 22 May 1943, PREM 3 401/6.
4 Woodward, II, p. 569.
5 Howard, p. 626.

> The list of supplies . . . shall . . . be liable to variation to meet unforeseen developments in the war situation. If shipping losses, production failures, or the necessities of other operations render their fulfilment prohibitive, it may be necessary to reduce them. On the other hand, if conditions permit, the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada will be glad to review the schedules from time to time for the purpose of increasing the quantities to be provided and delivered.[1]

Even with the promise of increased supplies at the end, this clause annoyed the Russians, which indicates what the fate of a more restrictive clause would have been. Borisenko, of the Soviet Trade Delegation, declared that the clause even as it stood did 'not strengthen the spirit of the Protocol, on the contrary it (made) the commitment vague and doubtful'.[2] Despite the obvious truth in this, the Allies, with the broken promises of the second protocol fresh in their minds, insisted that the clause remain.[3]

It was not in this clause, however, that the real difference between the second and third protocols lay. It resided rather in the type and quantity of supplies which the Western powers offered. The Americans, given the improvement of the supply routes, delivered in the third protocol period far more than ever before, while the British, given their acute manpower shortages[4] and the levelling-off of their production, offered far less. In addition, although the British Secretary of State for War, Grigg, could record quite accurately in his memoirs that 'So far as equipment is concerned I believe it to be broadly true that, from the time of the fall of Tunis in May 1943, we had solved our problems . . .',[5] the British could not supply the type of commodities the Russians needed. Given that in 1943 only 63 per cent of Soviet territory under cultivation before the war was actually in Soviet hands,[6] it was food, trucks and equipment for reconstruction, that the Russians wanted from the West. But the British offer of industrial equipment, though much greater than previously,[7] was dwarfed

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1 ASE(43)56, 11 June 1943, CAB 92/6.
2 ASE(43)63, 10 July 1943, CAB 92/7.
3 ASE(43)69, 27 July 1943, CAB 92/7; for American support of the British position, tel. from Halifax, no. 141 MOSSY, 21 July, 1943, WO 193/669.
4 See Postan, British War Production, pp. 304-5.
5 P. J. Grigg, Prejudice and Judgment (Great Britain, 1948), p. 363.
6 Werth, Russia at War, p. 566.
7 Outstanding orders of civil equipment stood at £13,110,600 on 30 June 1943. Shipments under the first and second protocols had been £773,000 and £7,500,000 respectively (WP(43)475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42).

by the Americans'. Their offer of motorized transport and rolling stock meanwhile, which the Joint Intelligence Committee estimated on 28 April 1943 was the Russians' greatest need,[1] was not renewed. The British did maintain their aircraft commitment of 200 fighters a month, which was undoubtedly of value to the Russians - both Stalin[2] and the Czechoslovak military attaché,[3] one of the War Office's most reliable sources of information in Moscow, stressed the need for planes during the 1943 summer offensive - but the value of this offer was reduced by the sending of obsolescent aircraft not much to the Russians' liking.

For the British protocol commitment until the end of 1943 was 50 Hurricanes a month, supplemented as before by 150 Airacobras from the United States.[4] Popular as the Airacobra was with the Russians, the Hurricane had long been an object of criticism and disdain. Stalin had attacked it in his outburst at the banquet for Willkie in September 1942, and R.A.F. officers in the Soviet Union had found themselves criticized that autumn for sending obsolescent aircraft. Even Russian passengers on trains complained to them on this score,[5] and the immensely influential journalist and writer, Ilya Ehrenburg, attacked the Allies in the Moscow press in October 1942 for sending 'very few aircraft, and not the best they have either'.[6] Moreover, from July 1942 onwards there were recurring complaints from the Russians about the fact that they were being sent reconditioned Hurricanes and Spitfires rather than new ones.[7] Although the proportion of these was small - only 121 of the 765 fighters provided between January and June 1943 -[8] and although the Air Ministry assured the Russians that such planes had as long a useful life ahead of them after their overhaul as any

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1 COS(43)89th mtg (O), CAB 79/60.
2 FRUS, 1943, III, p. 759.
3 Report from Col. Pika, 11 Mar. 1943, FO 371 36958 N1539/75/38.
4 ASE(43)92, 21 Oct. 1943, CAB 92/7. In October 1943 Arnold in fact asked the British to reduce their demand for Airacobras on the Russians' behalf. Production of these was changing from the P-39 to the P-63 model, and there was to be a temporary shortage. Portal, however, objected, pleading the shortage of Spitfires, and Arnold did not persist. (Letters Arnold to Portal 14 Oct. 1943, Portal to Arnold, 7 Nov. 1943, AIR 8/1061.)
5 30 MM to AM, AIR 883, 14 Sept, 1942, AIR 20/3904.
6 FO 371 32937 N5525/178/38.
7 War diary of air section of mission, 19 July 1942, AIR 2/7861. The subsequent complaints are numerous; for one, see ASE(43) 2nd mtg, min. 2, 28 Jan. 1943, CAB 92/5.
8 War diary of air section, 10 July 1943, AIR 2/7861.

directly off the production line,[1] Russian complaints could not be silenced. They insisted on seeing it as a matter of prestige. They believed they were being given second-rate aircraft[2] and even suspected, so Maisky told Beaverbrook on 7 January 1943, that the Red Army was being given Hurricanes through Britain's fear of Soviet post-war influence.[3]

Despite this history of complaints, the Air Ministry still offered the Russians Hurricanes in the third protocol period. It knew that its ally coveted other fighters - particularly the Spitfire and the 'supremely versatile'[4] Mosquito -[5] but these, after 'relentless' investigation of its resources,[6] it did not feel able to offer. Targets for fighter production in 1943 had had to be lowered because of manpower shortages and the need to give preference to heavy bombers for the intensifying air offensive over Germany. Output of fighters therefore remained fairly level throughout the year.[7] But at the same time Britain's demand for fighters actually increased with the growth of the Mediterranean campaign and the need to prepare for the invasion of Europe, 'Overlord', in 1944. The bulk of enemy aircraft was now concentrated in theatres of Allied operations. The Italian air force had a strength of 1,300 aircraft in July 1943, while of the Luftwaffe's 6,300 machines 1,700 were in Germany; 1,200 in Italy and south-east Europe; 800 in France and the Low Countries; 200 in Norway and Denmark - and 2,400 in the Soviet Union.[8] Confronted with this, and with unexpected difficulties in the production of engines for the Spitfire[9] and the Typhoon, the Air Ministry declared on 28 July, 'Between now and the end of the year our fighter position is critical and virtually no expansion in Fighter Squadrons is planned, except a small increase in India'.[10] As a result the A.S.E. would not improve the protocol offer of aircraft for the period until the end of 1943. Furthermore, it would not even guarantee, when the protocol was being negotiated in July, to give the Russians a more definite offer for the first six months of 1944 than fifty

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1 Letter Eden to Maisky, 18 Nov. 1942, FO 371 32936 N5445/178/38.
2 ASE(43) 2nd mtg, min. 2, 28 Jan. 1943, CAB 92/5.
3 BB papers, box 20/1.
4 Munson, Aircraft of World War II, p. 51.
5 ASE(43)63, 9 July 1943, CAB 92/7.
6 ASE(43)70, 28 July 1943, CAB 92/7.
7 Postan, pp. 308-9.
8 J. Ehrman, p. 53.
9 ASE(43)10th mtg, min. 2(b), 29 July 1943, CAB 92/5.
10 ASE(43)70, loc. cit.

fighters a month (to supplement the U.S. Airacobras). It would not specify the type of fighter it would offer then, and in fact stated categorically in August that 'since the resources available for our own operational wants were not even adequate for operations begun or in prospect', the Russians would not be given Spitfires or Mosquitoes at any time during the third protocol.[1] To mitigate this somewhat, the Russians were offered models and plans for the Mosquito, so that they could manufacture the fighter-bomber themselves,[2] but this, as will be seen, in no way eased their disappointment.

No doubt this was partly because the third protocol offer of aircraft was also unsatisfactory - from the Russians' point of view - in spare parts. The Soviet Military Mission had contended throughout the winter and spring of 1943 that the Red Army needed an increase of 30 per cent on the rate of spare parts agreed upon in June 1942. Kharmalov stated in January 1943 that the supply position for Hurricanes in the Soviet Union was 'catastrophic' and that 600 of the machines were grounded awaiting spare parts.[3] The Air Ministry, however, would not consider any increase. It thought the existing rate of spare parts adequate, assuming it were delivered in full, which had not been possible in the autumn of 1942. It thought also that Russian demands were excessive and unreasonable. The quantity of spare parts Kharmalov requested in February over and above the existing supplies, was equivalent to 600 new aircraft. Obviously these were not needed simply, as the Russians claimed, to make 600 aircraft serviceable.[4] The Air Ministry and number 30 Military Mission therefore concluded that Russian supply and maintenance was at fault, and they would not consider increasing the rate of spare parts until Soviet practice was brought into line with British.[5] As the Air Ministry said on 28 January, 'in view of the shortage of engine spares for this type of aircraft it would be wrong to despatch spare parts on a scale so far exceeding that required by our own operational units, without being satisfied of what was really required by the Soviet Air Force.'[6] Predictably, however, the Russians did not respond to

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1 ASE(43)10th mtg, loc. cit; ASE(43)75, 11 Aug. 1943, CAB 92/7.
2 WM(43) 86th concl., min. 4, 16 June 1943, CAB 65/34.
3 ASE(43)7, 20 Jan. 1943, CAB 92/6.
4 Mtg at MAP, 2 Feb. 1943, AVIA 15/1865.
5 30 Mission to AM, AIR 844, 29 Apr. 1943, AIR 19/293.
6 ASE(43)2nd mtg, min. 1, CAB 92/5.

the A.S.E.'s suggestions that R.A.F. maintenance experts should be attached to the military mission in Moscow.[1] Hence, with the A.S.E.'s support[2] the Air Ministry continued to resist, and finally in September, rejected completely the Russian demands for more spare parts.[3]

In several respects, therefore, the British promise of aircraft in the third protocol period, though numerically the same as previous years, was disappointing to the Russians. The same was true of the offer of tanks. The Red Army requested three thousand of these for the third protocol, all from the United Kingdom. Furthermore, it specified that these tanks, as far as possible, should be of the same type as those provided during the second protocol.[4] Presumably the Russians set great store on standardization, since this request, given the cessation of Matilda production[5] and their own dislike of the Churchill and Centaur tanks,[6] limited the offer to the obsolete Valentine. The War Office was embarrassed and astonished by this request: embarrassed because it had intended terminating Valentine production during the third protocol period; astonished because the Russians, after criticizing obsolescent weapons, preferred this type of tank. 'It is not known', the War Office said in a note for the A.S.E. on 24 April, 'why the Russians appear so eager to get Valentines, even when armed only with a two-pounder gun. It is of course a very reliable tank but cannot be considered a modern weapon'.[7] The Director of Armoured Fighting Vehicles was even more mystified. He had said of the Valentine three months earlier,

> though it has done good work, (it) is now definitely obsolete. Everything that shoots goes through his (sic) armour, and his two-pounder is effective, neither as an anti-tank nor as anti-personnel weapon. The six-pounder Valentine is a bastard, having no machine-gun.[8]

Nonetheless the Russians reiterated their preference for the Valentine tank of any mark. The Red Army apparently preferred the tank of which it already had large holdings, which its troops knew

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1 ASE(43)49, 17 May 1943, CAB 92/6.
2 ASE(43)8th mtg, min. 3, 28 May 1943, CAB 92/5.
3 War diary entry, 5 Sept. 1943, AIR 2/7861.
4 ASE(43)39, 24 Apr. 1943, CAB 92/6.
5 Ibid.
6 Minute from Donaldson to Lyttelton, 24 May 1943, FO 371 36934 N3233/45/38. These tanks were said to be unsuitable for winter conditions.
7 ASE(43)39, loc. cit.
8 The U.K. Tank Programme, 25 Jan. 1943, WO 193/540.

well and which served the purpose of mopping up pockets of resistance.[1] The Valentine's armament was obviously inferior but the Russians were prepared in some cases to replace the British gun with their own 76.2 mm guns.[2] Consequently the Ministry of Supply and the War Office agreed to maintain Valentine production in 1943 solely for the Russians' benefit.[3] However, even doing this, they were unable to offer more than one thousand tanks over the twelve-month period. The Russians had to accept in lieu of British tanks two thousand Sherman (M4A2) tanks[4] from the surplus production in the United States.[5] They were also obliged to accept the logical reduction in spare parts from Britain which followed on this. The past system of automatic shipments of spare parts to maintain all tanks sent to the Soviet Union, regardless of casualties suffered in the interim, was replaced by an offer of twelve months' spare parts for each Valentine in the third protocol offering.[6]

The limitations of the offer of tanks and aircraft were highlighted by the fact that there were only two other military items on the British third protocol schedule. These were propellant and aviation fuel,[7] and the latter of these was really to the credit of the United States. Britain was to provide 10,000 tons a month of aviation fuel (later increased in November 1943 to 25,000 tons) from its plants in Abadan, while the Americans were to deliver equivalent quantities to the United Kingdom.[8] None of the military items the British had previously provided in the protocols was repeated. The Red Army continued to spurn British anti-tank guns and anti-tank rifles, and although the War Office, in a fit of self-denying pique, tried late in 1942 to convince the Soviet Military Mission of the value of the six-pounder gun,[9] the Russians were not impressed. Their own artillery production was immense in 1943 - they produced no less than 130,000 guns of different calibres[10] -

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1 Minute MOP for PM, no. 221, 20 July 1943, BT 28/94B, MISC 203.
2 B. Perrett, The Valentine in North Africa (London, 1972), p. 68.
3 Discussion Sir Andrew Duncan, Minister of Supply, and PM, 23 July 1943, BT 28/94B, MISC 203.
4 ASE(43)10th mtg, min, 2, 29 July 1943, CAB 92/5.
5 ASE(43)39, loc. cit.
6 ASE(43)39, loc. cit.; ASE(43)92, 21 Oct. 1943, CAB 92/7.
7 ASE(43)92, loc. cit.
8 Motter, The Persian Corridor, p. 306.
9 ASE(42)23rd mtg, min. 4, 14 Dec. 1942, FO 371 32937 N6430/178/38.
10 Werth, p. 565. There was also a vast improvement in the fire power of the infantry: the number of sub-machine guns was three times that of 1942 in 1943, while that of light and heavy machine guns was two and a half times that of 1942.

and they rightly enough remained convinced of the superiority of their own artillery, such as the 76 mm anti-tank gun.[1]

In some cases the British improved their protocol offering by shipping the backlogs from the second protocol. The A.S.E. agreed that these supplies which were not repeated in the third protocol should be sent until the previous commitment had been met. Bren carriers, however, were an exception to this, and the large majority of the 2,233 awaiting shipment in Canada were repossessed with the agreement of the Russians. In return aircraft were treated as a special case and the second protocol backlog of fifty-one sent to the Russians.[2] The backlog of tanks, however, was cancelled. Since tanks were to be sent in the third protocol, 1,074 outstanding from the second protocol were cancelled,[3] despite the Russians' dismay at this move.[4]

Given the overstraining of the British economy by the end of 1943,[5] the British contribution to the third protocol had, despite its limitations, considerable merit. Apart from the military supplies listed, it included raw materials - some of which were not provided by the United States - industrial equipment and machine tools.[6] Nonetheless, when set against the U.S. offer as a whole, the British schedule of supplies seemed almost insignificant. For the American third protocol commitment included not only food, clothing and $827 million worth of industrial equipment, but at the same time offered substantial military supplies.[7] These, moreover, were the supplies which met the Red Army's pressing need for mobility. Twenty thousand jeeps, 3,000 artillery prime movers, 10,000 railroad flat cars and 100,000 field telephones were to be provided as requested; 132,000 trucks were offered against a demand for 144,000 - and these were only a few of the numerous military items the U.S. agreed to provide. The War Department, in fact, 'substantially met Soviet requests in almost all categories except aircraft'.[8] In this category the Russians had requested 8,160 machines - 6,000 fighters (P-39), 1,200 light bombers (A-20), 600 medium bombers

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1 COS(43)265, 27 Sept, 1943, CAB 80/41.
2 WP(43)475, 25 Oct. 1943, CAB 66/42.
3 ASE(43)76, 20 Aug. 1943, CAB 92/7. 207 Valentines unshipped at the end of the second protocol were sent, however, in view of the phasing out of Valentine production (ibid.).
4 ASE(43)11th mtg, min. 2, 26 Aug. 1943, CAB 92/5.
5 Postan, p. 309.
6 ASE(43)92, 21 Oct. 1943, CAB 92/7.
7 Soviet Supply Protocols, pp. 66-75.
8 Leighton and Coakley, p. 675.

(B-25) and 360 transport planes (C-46, C-47)[1] - but this was an unrealistic request. Even though U.S. aircraft production rapidly accelerated in 1943,[2] General Arnold could not be prevailed upon to increase the protocol commitment to any substantial degree. He had agreed in January 1943 to offer the Russians some two hundred transport planes,[3] a commitment which continued in the new supply agreement, but generally the third protocol offer remained close to the second. An additional 600 Kittyhawks (P-40-N) and 78 medium bombers (B-25) were included, but the overall total (excluding the Airacobras on Britain's account) was 3,462.[4] The second protocol offering had been 2,544 aircraft.

The American offer was limited to some degree by the availability of shipping. Though with the small quantity of Canadian supplies it totalled 7,080,000 short tons (excluding planes to be flown to the Soviet Union and ships to be transferred to the Soviet flag), the W.S.A. agreed to ship only 4,500,000 short tons of this; 150,000 short tons a month via the Persian Gulf, and 225,000 short tons a month via the Pacific. The northern route, not unexpectedly, was considered too unreliable to be taken into consideration in the spring of 1943. In fact the W.S.A. eventually raised these targets a little when the Russian representatives, on being asked to select 4,500,000 short tons of high priority cargo, insisted that the United States should ship six million tons. They were confident that the northern route would be able to carry 1.4 million tons during the autumn and winter months, and they set a more optimistic target for the Persian Gulf of 2.6 million tons instead of the W.S.A.'s 1.8 million tons. They were, however, less confident about the Pacific route's capacity and thought that, given the slow turnaround, a more realistic target was 2 million rather than 2.7 million tons.[5] Eventually the Soviet representatives won a compromise from the Americans. The shipping position improved in May 1943 when the struggle with Doenitz's U-boats turned decisively in the Allies' favour. At the same time the political situation deteriorated markedly when Stalin learnt of the postponement of the continental invasion until 1944.[6] In July the

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1 ASE(43)92, loc. cit.
2 Craven and Cate, The Army Air Forces . . ., p. 409.
3 RAFDEL, W'ton to AM, TROON 89, 11 Jan. 1943, AIR 19/292; Leighton and Coakley, p. 585.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 675.
5 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 673-4.
6 See Woodward, II, pp. 553-64.

Americans agreed to increase their shipping commitment. The President's Soviet Protocol Committee raised its estimate for Atlantic shipments to 200,000 tons a month, by either the Arctic or Persian Gulf, 'whichever in the light of changing circumstances proves from time to time to be more efficient'. The committee continued to insist the Pacific route should carry 225,000 tons a month, since this was its present capacity; but it included in the final draft of the protocol a provision that Soviet flag ships should be transferred from the Pacific to the Atlantic, should Japanese interference lower the capacity of the former route. Thus, the total offering from the Western Hemisphere was finally set at 5,100,000 tons, 2,700,000 via the Pacific and 2,400,000 via the Atlantic.[1]

In the event the Americans managed to deliver this quantity of supplies and more over the third protocol period. The capacity of the supply routes and the escort position improved so much that even the northern route exceeded expectations. Priority planning was not disrupted by sudden military crises on the Eastern front. Inter-allied liaison became easier with practice and the Russians carefully gave priority to those supplies, like food, metals, chemicals and petroleum products, which could be easily supplied, should the need arise, without disrupting U.S. production.[2] In many ways in fact this was the least crisis-ridden protocol of all.

Nonetheless the British still found themselves involved in long and at times acrimonious disputes with the Russians. The first of these, not surprisingly, concerned the quality of the aircraft they were supplying to their ally. On 21 June 1943 the military mission cabled from Moscow that the Russians were 'furious'[3] at the fact that 40 per cent of the Spitfires, promised them in the previous October but only recently delivered in their entirety,[4] were reconditioned.[5] The Chiefs of Staff were not impressed. On the following day they confirmed their policy of not differentiating between old and new aircraft and agreed that there should be no change in the practice of sending the Russians some reconditioned aircraft.[6] The Russians therefore took matters into their own hands. On 20 August they refused to accept any aircraft from the British with

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 674.
2 Ibid.
3 Martel to CIGS, MIL 9365, 20 June 1943, WO 193/669.
4 Minute Eden to PM, 3 May 1943, PREM 3 401/21.
5 COS to Martel, OZ.1748, 22 June 1943, WO 193/669.
6 COS(43)107th mtg, min. 3, 22 June 1943, CAB 79/27.

more than forty hours flying time to its credit.[1] A month later they asked that the fifty planes they had thus rejected should be replaced by more modern Hurricanes IID's and that henceforward all other protocol offerings from the United Kingdom should be Spitfires, Mosquitoes and Typhoons. The Hurricane, they said, was obsolescent and should no longer be supplied.[2]

The British treated these requests without sympathy at first. They were piqued that the Russians would not admit that some of the flying time on the Hurricanes they rejected resulted from the aircraft being delivered part of the way by air in an effort to get them more quickly to the Soviet Union.[3] The Russians also seemed singularly ungrateful for earlier efforts which the Air Ministry had made on their behalf. Only 14 of the 200 Albemarles (the original offer of one hundred had been doubled in January 1943) had been taken delivery of by autumn 1943; this was despite British assistance in training Soviet crews to fly them and in securing rights of passage through the various countries en route to the Soviet Union.[4] The Red Army had apparently lost interest in these aircraft with the American offer of transport aircraft in the third protocol. In September the Soviet representatives agreed to the British expropriating one hundred of the Albemarles for their own use and refused to accept the remaining eighty-six until they were modified.[5] At the same time they showed considerable indifference to taking delivery of the sample Mosquito.[6]

This was not an atmosphere to encourage greater sacrifices from the Air Ministry. It refused to change its policy on reconditioned aircraft; it vetoed the supply of Spitfires, Mosquitoes and Typhoons[7] and declared it out of the question to replace the rejected Hurricanes. If the Russians did not want these aircraft, it said on 24 September, then they should be diverted to India.

Within four months, however, the Air Ministry was forced to reconsider its position. It became increasingly obvious that British prestige in the Soviet Union was suffering from the sending of reconditioned aircraft and that Hurricanes of older marks were completely unsuited to the Red Army's needs.[9] The Hurricane IIB

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1 Entry in war diary of air mission, AIR 2/7861.
2 30 MM to AM, AIR 989, 20 Sept. 1943, quoted in annex B, ASE(43) 89; CAB 92/7.
3 ASE(43)12th mtg, min. 13, 15 Oct. 1943, CAB 92/5.
4 ASE(43)79, 23 Aug. 1943, CAB 92/7.
5 ASE(44)10, 3 Mar. 1944, CAB 92/8.
6 Entry in war diary of air mission, 17 Dec. 1943, AIR 2/7861.
7 AM to 30 MM, AX.914, 18 Oct. 1943, AIR 8/1061.
8 AM to HQ, RAF Middle East, AX,89, ibid.
9 Note by DWO, 2 Dec. 1943, AIR 19/293.

and IIC, for instance, 410 of which had been provided so far in the third protocol,[1] had limited operational uses. One of them - of all things for the Russians - was convoy protection![2] On 3 January 1944 the Air Member for Supply and Organization admitted to the Secretary of State for Air,

> I think it is generally agreed that we ought no longer to send Hurricanes to Russia - the telegrams from No. 30 Mission have made it clear that Hurricanes have become a laughing stock in Russia, if one can regard the epithet 'flying coffin' as a laughing matter . . . As a matter of broad judgement I think we could manage to send 50 Spitfires a month to Russia. I cannot support this by figures because there are too many uncertain factors in the situation such as the probable wastage rate of fighters during the first two months of Overlord.[3]

Before the Air Ministry could act, however, the Russians took the initiative themselves. On 11 January P. Soloviev of the Soviet Trade Delegation informed the Air Ministry that the Soviet authorities would not accept any more Hurricanes, either new or reconditioned. As a result the British three days later finally offered the Soviet Union 190 of the coveted Spitfires. These would meet the outstanding commitment under the third protocol and would all be new Spitfires IX's, although, as the Air Ministry hastened to assure the Russians, later shipments of this fighter might well be reconditioned.[4] In return for this offer the Russians agreed to accept new Hurricanes rather than Spitfires in place of the aircraft previously rejected at Basra.[5] Thus the protracted and acrimonious dispute was laid to rest. The unfortunate episode of the Albemarles was also brought to a close a few weeks later when the Air Ministry repossessed the eighty-six planes which the Russians had continually refused to approve as fit for delivery.[6]

Undoubtedly this recrimination over aircraft diminished the value, politically and militarily, of Britain's supply agreement with the Soviet Union; but the main source of contention between the two countries in this third protocol period was the resumption of the northern convoys. At the start of the third protocol the Russians wanted the British to commit themselves to shipping two-

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1 AM to HQ, RAF Middle East, AX.417, 22 Jan. 1944, AIR 8/1061.
2 Anonymous note for AMSO, 5 Dec. 1943, ibid.
3 3 Jan. 1944, AIR 8/1061.
4 ASE(44)5, 20 Jan. 1944, CAB 92/8.
5 ASE(44)7, 21 Feb. 1944, CAB 92/8.
6 ASE(44)10, loc. cit.

thirds of their supply programme in their own ships by the northern route.[1] Airacobras from the United States and lead and wool from the Dominions, it was recognized, would be sent via Alaska in the former case, and via the Pacific in the latter.[2] The British, however, would give no such undertaking. Shipping losses were by June 1943 well below the 2.4 per cent limit set at Casablanca[3] and the whole of the British protocol commitment of approximately half a million tons[4] required only two convoys to north Russia to clear it;[5] but the British were wary of their broken promises of the past. Moreover, as Churchill said on 11 August, 'There is of course no question of our being able to resume these convoys in the near future on account of the manner in which the operations in the Mediterranean have broadened out.'[6] The Ministry of War Transport and the Admiralty therefore would undertake only to supplement Soviet shipping to the degree necessary to ensure the delivery of British supplies.[7] This was a considerable improvement on their undertakings of previous years, but Borisenko declared it 'insulting'. It was, he said on 14 August, another reflection of the unsympathetic attitude of the Admiralty, and in particular Admiral Pound who dictated caution to the Cabinet.[8]

From this time on, Soviet pressure for the resumption of convoys to north Russia intensified. On 25 August the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires delivered to the Foreign Office a letter asking for convoys to restart, as had been promised, in September.[9] The Persian Gulf had failed to reach the capacity of 240,000 tons a month that Churchill had rashly predicted when he had cancelled the convoys in March.[10] Furthermore, the letter claimed, the Pacific route had disappointed expectations because of constant Japanese interference.[11] In fact the capacity of the various routes was

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1 Note by head of Marine Branch Intelligence, 26 July 1943, ADM 116/5087.
2 Soviet Supply Protocols, p. 53.
3 Leighton and Coakley, p. 592.
4 ASE to W'ton, no. 23 MOSSY, 10 June 1943, FO 371 36937 N1532/46/38.
5 ASE(43)86, 18 Sept, 1943, CAB 92/7.
6 PM to SOS FA, WELFARE no. 29, 11 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36990 N4724/408/38.
7 ASE(43)86, loc. cit.
8 Letter Firebrace to Warner (northern dept.), 14 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36956 N4631/66/38.
9 FO to Moscow, no. 1199 DEDIP, 28 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36931 N4851/45/38.
10 Churchill, IV, p. 676.
11 FO to Moscow, no. 1199, loc. cit.

not as low as the Russians claimed,[1] although they were certainly below target, and the British replied that operational considerations made it impossible for them to restart convoys in September.[2] This, naturally, infuriated the Kremlin. As the Commercial Secretary at the embassy in Moscow observed,

> The Soviet Government realise that our decision to suspend Northern convoys (a) preserves both merchant and naval ships from being sunk, and (b) makes them available for other work. They will not however accept the decision with good grace until they are convinced that good use has been and is being made of these ships. They will only be convinced of this when a Second Front - as they interpret the phrase - has been established. Until then the suspension of convoys will continue to embitter the general relations between the two Governments.[3]

He was right. On 21 September Molotov sent for the British ambassador in Moscow and 'insisted upon the urgent resumption of convoys'. He emphasized that his government attached 'very great importance' to the matter[4] in view of the fact that it had so far received via the northern route less than one third of the previous year's supplies. On the Allies' own admission, Molotov said, the shipping position had improved. Roosevelt and Churchill had said on 19 August that Germany's submarines had abandoned the north Atlantic in favour of the southern route, and since then Italy and its battle fleet had surrendered unconditionally. In such circumstances the continued postponement of the northern convoys was 'quite unjustifiable'.[5]

This provoked a response in London, for it was obvious that, though Britain could physically meet its commitments to the Russians by the Persian route alone,[6] politically it would be unwise to do so. The Soviet government persisted in seeing the northern convoys 'as having an important bearing on (the United Kingdom's) intentions to help them'.[7] Consequently Prime Minister Churchill

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1 FO to Moscow, no. 1198 DEDIP, 27 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36931 N4851/45/38.
2 FO to Moscow, no. 1197, 27 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36990 N4724/408/38.
3 21 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36941 N4791/46/38.
4 Tel. Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 1005, 23 Sept. 1943, FO 371 36990 N5568/408/38.
5 FNP to Pres. Roosevelt, T.1463/3, 1 Oct. 1943, PREM 3 393/10.
6 Draft memorandum by Minister of Production, 31 Aug. 1943, FO 371 36990 N4713/408/38. This was excluding industrial equipment which for technical reasons could not be sent via the Pacific or Persian routes.
7 ASE(43)86, loc. cit.

ruled on 25 September, 'It is our duty if humanly possible to reopen these Arctic convoys, beginning in the latter part of November . . . We should try to run a November, December, January, February and March convoy - total, five.'[1] The Defence Committee agreed. Despite the reservations of the Admiralty, it was encouraged by the damaging of the Tirpitz by midget submarines on 22 September to plan four Arctic convoys in the winter. These, however, it made conditional on one thing - the 'settlement, satisfactory to us, of outstanding grievances regarding the treatment of our personnel in North Russia.'[2]

It did this because the Soviet attitude to the Britons in Archangel and Murmansk had worsened since the crisis of spring 1943. As in the year before, the Kremlin had become more intolerant of the presence of British personnel when the northern convoys were not running. It seemed that they were intent on exacting vengeance for the cancellation of the convoys, for American servicemen in the Soviet Union were consistently treated better.[3] Possibly also the Russians were influenced in this summer of 1943 by the presence in Moscow from April onwards of a new and controversial head of number 30 Military Mission. This was Lieut-General Giffard Martel who was unrepentedly of the school which believed that 'plain speaking is the only thing which a Russian can understand'.[4] He had been chosen more for his reputation as a tank expert[5] than as a diplomat, and at first the Russians did seem to appreciate his expertise. They offered him samples of the KV-1 and T-34 tanks for shipment back to the United Kingdom[6] and extended to him the opportunity to visit the battle-front - something that a head of the military mission had not done since June of the previous year.[7] Soon, however, Martel began to antagonize everyone, members of his own mission included,[8] by his condescending and rather Blimpish manner. He patronizingly offered the Soviet

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1 COS(43)583(O), CAB 80/75.
2 DO(43)9th mtg, min. 1, 28 Sept. 1943, CAB 69/5.
3 Report by J. Balfour (embassy staff), 10 Sept. 1943, FO 181/979.
4 War Diary entry for 25 Sept. 1943, WO 178/27.
5 In the 1920s he built a prototype of a small, cheap armoured vehicle utilizing rubber tracks with a car-type chassis, for the purpose of carrying an infantryman and his machine gun across open country (Ellis and Chamberlain, Fighting Vehicles, p. 40).
6 War diary entry, 23 Apr. 1943, WO 178/27.
7 Ibid.
8 For a full account of these quarrels within the mission, see FO 371 36970 N4598/163/38.

High Command advice as to how to hold a German armoured attack, and then, after the Russian victory at Kursk in the summer, boasted about the value of the advice he had given.[1] Even more unwisely, he showed a relentless curiosity about the details of Red Army organization and dispositions.[2] His behaviour during his visit to the operational front was typical. Confronted with the Soviet general's refusal to disclose the position of the Red Army units in the district, Martel pompously asserted his authority.

> This . . . was the moment for the tough stuff! Trying to look very angry I spoke out strongly and said: 'Do you imagine that I have come all the way out from England to put up with tomfoolery of that sort. I have never been so insulted before in my life. I certainly do not propose to put up with that kind of treatment for a moment.[3]

Not surprisingly, he soon found out he had to put up with far worse. When he visited the northern ports in June, soon after the news of the delay in the continental invasion had been broken to Stalin, he was soundly snubbed by the Soviet authorities. Only three of the thirty Russians invited to a reception in his honour actually attended and none of these were service or civilian authorities.[4] Within weeks of this incident, moreover, the Soviet embassy in London announced that no more visas or special passes would be granted for British personnel to serve in northern Russia.[5] The Russians reiterated their argument that there should be equality of numbers or 'reciprocity' between British servicemen in the Soviet Union and Russian representatives in the United Kingdom.[6]

This posed considerable problems. One hundred and fifty-two of the British shore establishment in north Russia were due for relief, but they could not return unless the Russians agreed to provide visas for their replacements. Some of them had served more than eighteen months in the Arctic when the desired period of duty was recognized to be only nine months. Their morale was noticeably declining under the impact of ill-health, the poor weather, monotonous tinned food and Soviet restrictions.[7] There was the occas-

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1 Notes for History, 5 Mar. 1944, Liddell Hart papers 11/1944/8.
2 Ibid.; war diary entries, 22 Apr. 1943 et seq., WO 178/27.
3 Lieut-General Sir Giffard Martel, An Outspoken Soldier - his views and memoirs (London, 1949), p. 221.
4 Private letter from Adm. Fisher to DNI, 24 June 1943, ADM 199/606.
5 Chronology of difficulties in northern ports, 28 Sept. 1943, ADM 199/606.
6 COS(43)187, 3 July 1943, CAB 80/40.
7 Minute for VCNS, n.d., ADM 199/606.

ional breakdown, a suicide and a murder.[1] There was also unlimited potential for friction between the visitors and the local authorities, and early in August two members of the merchant navy were arrested for smoking in a prohibited area and assaulting the official who apprehended them. They were not subject to British jurisdiction, being members of the merchant navy, and were therefore sentenced by a Soviet court to five and two years' imprisonment respectively.[2] The sentences they would have received for the same offences in Britain, a Foreign Office legal expert estimated, were fourteen days' imprisonment or a £10-15 fine.[3]

The intolerable situation provoked much debate in London. The Prime Minister was inclined, since it had been shown that diplomatic approaches had little effect,[4] to withdraw the servicemen in the north ostentatiously. 'Experience has taught me', he cabled from Quebec where he was meeting Roosevelt, 'that it is not worthwhile arguing with Soviet people. One simply has to confront them with a new fact and await their reactions.'[5] The ambassador in Moscow, however, thought it would be politic to meet Soviet demands part way and halve the northern establishment when the convoys were not running. If the British personnel numbered only 160 in the idle months, Clark Kerr argued, the Russians might prove more cooperative when the convoys restarted.[6] The Chiefs of Staff approved of neither suggestion. Each of them would have involved a considerable diplomatic defeat since the British had never admitted the right of the Kremlin to dictate the number of men needed for duties in north Russia.[7] Each proposal furthermore would have left unsolved the question of the twenty-four merchant ships and their 700 crew stranded in the northern ports since the cancellation of the convoys in the spring. Without the service establishment these men would be left without hospital services or communications with Great Britain.[8] Finally there was the argument of the Admiralty that there were no months which could be described as idle.[9] Unbeknown to the Foreign Office, it was about to launch

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1 Minute by H. M. Hollyer, 25 Aug. 1943, MT 59/1121.
2 Chronology of difficulties . . ., ADM 199/606.
3 Minute by Mr. Dean, FO 371 37040 N4853/4013/38.
4 Clark Kerr had already approached Molotov without success on 9 June (COS(43)187, annex 1, CAB 80/40).
5 COS(43)214, 25 July 1943, CAB 80/41.
6 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 751 DEDIP, ADM 199/606.
7 Extract from COS(43)118th mtg, 26 July 1943, ADM 199/606.
8 Woodward, II, p. 570.
9 Letter from Waldock (head of Marine Intelligence) to Mr. Dew of FO, 19 Aug. 1943, ADM 199/606.

an operation against the German surface vessels in the north, and for this the naval personnel in the Arctic were essential.[1] Consequently the British could at first only agree to make another, ineffectual approach to the Soviet government in August,[2] and to withdraw a small number of servicemen in September. These were the number 126 base unit who had been sent in the early days of the protocols to assist in the arrival of supplies and whose usefulness had long since passed.[3] The larger issue of the size of the naval establishment was deferred until the Prime Minister returned from North America.[4]

This was the situation when Molotov made his peremptory demand on 21 September for the immediate resumption of the northern convoys. Churchill, who had returned to London two days earlier, was sufficiently impressed by this to agree that the Soviet demand must be met; but, in accordance with the Defence Committee's decision of 28 September, he coupled his agreement with a request for better treatment of British personnel. On 1 October he told Stalin that the convoys would be resumed. There would be one each month, he hoped, from November to February, each of thirty-five British and American ships. But, he added, this was not 'a contract or a bargain, but rather a declaration of our solemn and earnest resolve'. The Royal Navy was still strained by the Mediterranean campaign, the Far Eastern war and the Battle of the Atlantic. In the latter the Germans were now using a new and effective acoustic torpedo. Furthermore, Churchill said, the British government must raise with the Soviet government the question of its representatives in north Russia. It could not accept, he said, the Soviet demand for 'reciprocity' in personnel and must claim the right to be the sole judge of its own operational needs. The many restrictions placed on British servicemen were unnecessary and 'inappropriate for men sent out by an ally to carry out operations of the greatest interest to the Soviet Union'. He requested immediate agreement to new visas and asked for an assurance that visas would no longer be withheld in the future. In addition he requested that a small medical unit should be allowed to operate in the north and that British seamen committing offences should be

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1 Woodward, II, p. 571.
2 Ibid.
3 Martel to DMI, MIL 9953, 18 Sept. 1943, ADM 199/606. The unit left the Soviet Union on 5 October (WO 178/27).
4 Woodward, II, p. 571.

handed over to their own superiors for discipline. The Russian attitude at present 'makes an impression upon officers and men alike which is bad for Anglo-Soviet relations, and would be deeply injurious if Parliament got to hear of it.'[1]

Planning for the convoys went ahead on the assumption that this high-level appeal would improve the situation in north Russia. But after almost two weeks delay, Stalin replied in an 'offensive'[2] manner. He clearly resented Churchill's refusal to make a binding commitment to run four convoys, for in his view

> Supplies from the British Government to the U.S.S.R., armaments and other military goods, cannot be considered otherwise than as an obligation . . . delivery of armaments and military supplies to the U.S.S.R. through Persian ports cannot compensate in any way for those supplies which were not delivered by the Northern route . . . Therefore, at the present time, when the forces of the Soviet Union are strained to the utmost to secure the needs of the front in the interests of success of the struggle against the main forces of our common enemy, it would be inadmissable to have the supplies of the Soviet armies depend on the arbitrary judgment of the British side. It is impossible to consider this posing of the question to be other than a refusal of the British Government to fulfil the obligations it undertook and as a kind of threat addressed to the U.S.S.R.

On the question of British servicemen Stalin defended the idea of 'reciprocity' between them and the numbers of Russians in the United Kingdom. There were far too many Britons in the Soviet Union, he claimed, and the withdrawal of number 126 base unit had only proved that most officers were 'for many months . . . doomed to idleness'. In these circumstances they resorted to bribing Soviet officials for information, and, he assured Churchill, 'your mention of many formalities and restrictions in the northern ports is based on inaccurate information'.[3]

Churchill's reaction to this telegram was a characteristic mixture of aggression and generous impulse. 'He snorted as he read it', Cadogan recalls, 'and, at the end, said "I'll stop convoys." But I suggested another reply and he calmed down.'[4] Churchill told Roosevelt on 16 October,

> I think, or at least I hope, this message came from the machine rather than from Stalin, as it took twelve days to prepare. The Soviet machine is quite convinced it can get every-

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1 Sir Winston Churchill, The Second World War, vol. V (Sydney, 1952), pp. 234-6.
2 Woodward, II, p. 573.
3 Churchill, pp. 238-9.
4 Cadogan, Diaries . . ., p. 568.

> thing by bullying, and I am sure it is a matter of some importance to show that this is not always necessarily true.[1]

Two days later he summoned F. Gusev, who had replaced Maisky as Soviet ambassador in September. He handed Stalin's message back to the ambassador saying, 'I am not prepared to receive it'. However, he made a point of assuring Gusev that he desired to meet the Soviet leader and to work with the Soviet Union both then and after the war.[2] Later, he made a further conciliatory gesture and agreed to let the first of the convoys sail — this was partly because it included U.S. ships allocated to this route expressly at the request of the British. But Churchill also withdrew his earlier instructions to Eden, who was on his way to a meeting of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, to propose the abandonment of the convoys. He left it to Eden's discretion in the coming meeting with the Soviet authorities to resolve the issue of British personnel in north Russia.[3]

Fortunately this conference in Moscow from 19 to 30 October proved to be an 'unqualified success'.[4] The Russians made it clear that, whatever their attitude to the convoys might be, they wished general relations with the West to be established on 'a footing of permanent friendship'. As evidence of this, they conceded ground on a number of points so that they could meet British and American views.[5] This resulted in the establishment of the European Advisory Committee in London for the discussion of post-war European questions, the creation of an Allied Advisory Committee to include the Russians in the control of Italy, and the publication of documents agreeing on the future of Austria, Italy, and captured German war criminals. More important, the conference issued a four-Power declaration which stated the determination of the Powers 'to continue hostilities against those Axis Powers with which they respectively are at war until such Powers have laid down their arms on the basis of unconditional surrender'. This laid the spectre of a separate Soviet-German peace to rest permanently and showed the Kremlin's eagerness for allied unity;

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1 Churchill, p. 240.
2 Ibid., pp. 241-2.
3 Ibid., pp. 240-1.
4 Political Review of Events in the Soviet Union during 1943, FO 371 43336 N6534/183/38.
5 Woodward, II, p. 594. Woodward gives a full coverage of the discussion at this conference in pp. 581-94.

it signed the declaration even though, with China the fourth signatory at the United States' wish, such an action might have been provocative to the Japanese.

It was obvious that the Russians were eager for the conference to be a success. They seemed gratified at its being held in their capital and they were flattered also by the frankness with which Allied representatives took them into their confidence. The British and American generals, Ismay and Deane, particularly won their approval with their descriptions of the Allies' plans for a continental invasion in 1944. Their meeting with their Soviet counterparts Eden later called 'a diplomatic triumph'[1] as Ismay ingenuously told his audience,

> at every single Anglo-American Conference since we have been in the war together, the thought uppermost in all our minds has been to so arrange our affairs as to ensure the maximum possible diversion of enemy land and air forces from the Russian front. I do not for a moment suggest that in so doing we have thought only of Soviet interests. On the contrary, it has been unanimously and invariably recognized as the soundest strategy in the interests of the Allies as a whole.[2]

With such assurances and with the situation on the Eastern front exhilarating, even the icy Molotov began to thaw. He 'seemed to have a new victory to report every time we met', Ismay recalled,[3] and as the Red Army exploited its forcing of the Dnieper River in October, the conference was increasingly conducted with 'tact and skill and growing good humour'.[4] The Soviet press gave the proceedings a warm coverage[5] and Molotov paid the Allies the unique compliment of dining at the British embassy.[6]

In this atmosphere of goodwill, the problem of the servicemen in north Russia was amicably resolved. Both parties were willing to compromise a little, the Russians, it seemed, realizing soon after sending Stalin's telegram of 13 October that they had overstepped the mark. They seemed deeply impressed by Churchill's gesture of returning the message.[7] Molotov went out of his way in his first meeting with Eden on 19 October to stress how greatly the Soviet Union valued the convoys, and Stalin two days later

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1 The Reckoning, p. 411.
2 Mtg of 20 Oct., in COS(43)704(O), CAB 80/76.
3 Memoirs of Lord Ismay, p. 326.
4 Eden, quoted in Woodward, II, p. 594.
5 Werth, p. 678.
6 Churchill, V, pp. 261-2.
7 Eden, quoted in Woodward, p. 594; Churchill, pp. 242.

told the Foreign Secretary that his message had not been meant to cause offence. His differences with the Prime Minister, he said, were not about the character of the operation of the convoys but about whether these were a 'gift' or an obligation.[1] Eden for his part apparently had enough sympathy with the Soviet complaints to respond to these overtures. Although he claims to the contrary in his memoirs,[2] one suspects that he could see some basis for the Russians' argument that if only the British in north Russia had treated their people as equals, none of these difficulties would have arisen;[3] for Eden himself quarrelled bitterly with Martel on 28 October over the question of approach to the Russians. The general's passion for reprisals against the uncooperative 'Bolshevik Government' infuriated Eden[4] and convinced him that Martel was 'something of a calamity'[5] for Anglo-Soviet relations - 'an unfortunate choice', as he said later, who 'would not have been made if CIGS had not also been a trifle exasperated - to put it mildly - with the Russians'.[6]

In consultation with Molotov, Eden eventually hammered out an arrangement satisfactory to both British and Soviet governments. It was agreed that the 320 servicemen[7] in the northern ports should not be increased by more than 10 per cent without the knowledge of the Soviet government. Eden conceded that the size of the establishment should be reduced when the convoys were interrupted in the spring. Molotov in turn agreed that visas should be provided within these limits and that accommodation should be made available in an Archangel hospital to allow British casualties to be treated by their own medical personnel. The Kremlin also accepted that there would be less rigorous censorship of mails and that British personnel committing offences should be handed over to its own authorities.[8] In token of this, Stalin granted a pardon to the two sailors already serving sentences in Soviet prisons.[9]

This agreement provided the basis for considerably improved

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1 Woodward, p. 574.
2 The Reckoning, p. 413.
3 Woodward, p. 574.
4 Appendix N to war diary, Oct. 1943, WO 178/27. Major Birse testifies to the intensity of Eden and Martel's argument.
5 Minute, 19 Nov. 1943, FO 371 36970 N6997/163/38.
6 Minute, 21 Jan. 1944, FO 371 36970 N7241/163/38.
7 There was also a hospital unit which brought the total establishment to 383.
8 30 Mission to Admy, cable 061652C, 7 Nov. 1943, ADM 199/606.
9 Churchill, V, p. 261.

relations in the northern ports.[1] Consequently, as the strategic situation in the northern waters also improved, the British found themselves able to run convoys throughout the winter with an ease which surprised them and their allies. The German surface vessels no longer posed a dire threat. The Tirpitz was damaged, the Lützow had returned to the Baltic and the Scharnhorst was sunk in an engagement during the passage of the northern convoy late in December 1943. With the perpetual darkness and the growing preoccupations of the Luftwaffe elsewhere, the air threat to the convoys was also minimized. The result was that only 3 of the 191 vessels which sailed in this series of convoys failed to arrive. The British suffered naval losses of two destroyers and one fighter in defence of these convoys, but the enemy suffered far worse - he lost the Scharnhorst, eight U-boats and five aircraft.[2]

The only problems which perplexed the British during these convoys were the temporary inability of the Russian authorities in the north to handle the sudden increase in cargo, and their own failure to find sufficient cargo of high priority to fill their convoy quota. The former problem was soon resolved. The British and Americans, who found themselves unloading some of the ships of the November convoy for lack of skilled Russian labour in Murmansk, suggested that the convoy planned for January might have to be postponed.[3] The Russians soon responded! By March the rate of discharge in the northern ports showed a considerable improvement.[4]

The problem of suitable cargo, however, was more intractable. Churchill's promise to send 140 ships by the northern route during the winter had been largely politically motivated. It bore little relation to the size of the contribution Britain had to ship, which had been calculated to be 47 cargoes and proved to be only 34.[5] The Ministry of War Transport thought the promise to run four convoys was 'a gross mistake'.[6] Because much of the

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1 27th monthly report by Rr-Adm Archer, 22 Nov.-26 Dec. 1943, FO 371 43344 N666/232/38.
2 PM to Premier Stalin, T.1028/4, 3 May 1944, PREM 3 393/12.
3 ASE to Moscow, no. 13 MOSSY, 17 Jan. 1944, FO 371 43270 N154/25/38.
4 ASE to Moscow, no. 67 MOSSY, 14 Mar. 1944, FO 371 43271 N2045/25/38.
5 Note for Lyttelton, 19 Oct. 1943, PREM 3 393/10.
6 Minute by D. E. O'Neill, 19 Oct. 1943, MT 59/1121.

equipment for the Russians would not be produced until the end of the convoy period, the supply departments were confronted with the choice of either filling the early ships with food and other non-protocol items, bringing forward military supplies at their own expense or calling on the Americans. In fact it did all of these.[1] The War Office agreed in November to divert supplies from its own troops to enable the full total of one thousand Valentine tanks and one hundred G.L. II sets to be shipped in the winter period.[2] The Air Ministry, however, could not make a similar effort[3] and since much of industrial production for the Russians could not be accelerated beyond a certain limit,[4] the Ministry of War Transport had to lean increasingly on the United States. The Americans did not entirely welcome this. They had planned to meet their commitments entirely through the Pacific and Persian routes[5] (the latter of which now had surplus capacity), and it disrupted their planning to have to divert so much cargo to the northern route. They were also concerned at the possibility that their ships might be marooned in north Russia in the summer.[6] Nonetheless they responded to the British appeal. Otherwise, as Churchill admitted on 3 November, 'we shall be accused of a breach of faith'.[7] He did little to relieve the situation though, since in January 1944 when it was decided to postpone 'Overlord' by a month, he promised the Russians a further half convoy 'as a sweetener to U.J.'.[8] This meant that the Americans had finally to provide 123 of the 172 cargoes sent by the northern route over the whole winter period.[9] The Ministry of War Transport recorded its sincere hope in March 1944 that this would be the 'last effort to provide gratuitous assistance',[10] but undoubtedly the use of the northern route had considerable practical as well as political advantages. It allowed

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1 See ASE progress reports in CAB 92/8 and 92/9.
2 Grigg to Lyttelton, 19 Nov. 1943, BT 28/144.
3 Lyttelton to Grigg, 1 Nov. 1943, ibid.
4 Final draft of minute for PM, 27 Oct. 1943, MT 59/1121.
5 Memo by H. W. Hollyer(MWT), 18 Oct. 1943; Br Merchant Shipping Mission, W'ton to Shipminder, London, BILGE MOSSY 2820, 9 Nov. 1943, MT 59/1121.
6 Memo by Hollyer, 20 Dec. 1943, MT 59/1122.
7 Minute PM to MOP and MWT, no. 775/3, BT 28/144.
8 PM to deputy PM and Defence Committee, FROZEN no. 1138, 6 Jan. 1944, PREM 3 393/11.
9 PM to Premier Stalin, T.1028/4, 3 May 1944, PREM 3 393/12.
10 Letter Hollyer to British Merchant Shipping Mission, 1 Mar. 1944, MT 59/1123.

1,259,600 tons of supplies - 830,000 of them American - to be carried to the port of discharge the Russians still preferred.[1] It was a performance much better than previous years and one which helped the Allies in no small way to meet their commitments under the third protocol.

For the Pacific route in contrast had disappointed expectations over the winter of 1943-4. Ships under Soviet flag were forced through fear of Japanese interference to take a circuitous route to Vladivostock. This was by way of Kamachatka, Petropavlovsk and the Strait of Tartary rather than directly through the La Perouse Strait near the northern-most Japanese island of Hokkaido. This re-routing involved many vessels in heavy Arctic ice from which not even ice-breakers could free them. Several Liberty vessels broke up in these circumstances. Naturally the Russians pressed for further transfers of shipping to replace these, but since they were not prepared to honour the earlier agreement to transfer shipping under Soviet flag to other supply routes, the Americans resisted this pressure. As a result the rate of loadings on the western American seaboard dropped noticeably over the winter months. The nadir was reached in January 1944 when 102,000 short tons were shipped instead of the planned 225,000.[2] The December quarter as a whole saw shipments of only 669, 674.3 tons while the March quarter was even lower at 367,590.3 tons.[3] Had not the northern route been re-opened at this time, the Americans might well have had to entertain seriously the plans put forward by General Connolly of the Persian Gulf Command in September 1943 for raising the capacity of that route even further to 260,000 long tons a month.[4]

The Persian Gulf route indeed had a capacity of this figure in sight, assuming its personnel establishment and its development projects continued to be increased, for during 1943 all the efforts of the previous two years had begun to bear fruit. By the end of the year few of the major construction programmes in Iran remained to be completed.[5] The curse of divided responsibility had finally been eliminated with the British, less concerned about Middle Eastern security after Stalingrad and El Alamein, surrendering the control of movements to the Americans

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1 T.1028/4, loc. cit.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 676.
3 Minute by L. Pott, 26 May 1944, FO 371 43274 N3064/25/38.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 676.
5 Motter, p. 247.

in May 1943.[1] Civilian control of trucking and assembly operations was progressively replaced by U.S. Army control.[2] New records of cargo clearance began to be achieved. Aircraft assembly rose from an average of 75 planes a month in the last five months of Douglas operation of the assembly plants to an average of 182.9 planes a month in the twenty-one months of army control.[3] October 1943 was the peak month with a record 395 aircraft being assembled.[4] Ship turnaround was also accelerated to an average of 18 days in December 1943 compared with an appalling 55 days twelve months earlier.[5] Turnaround of railroad cars in the Soviet-controlled sector of the railway meanwhile was shortened by lending the Russians locomotives and by threatening to curtail supplies if their performance did not improve.[6]

Naturally some problems remained intractable. The aircraft assembly plant at Abadan never managed to clear its backlog completely, particularly after it had been flooded with British planes from the convoy crisis of spring 1943.[7] Pilferage of supplies by native and American staff and maintenance of vehicles also remained ineradicable difficulties.[8] Nonetheless with 289,070 long tons being shipped to its ports in May 1944 alone,[9] the Persian Gulf route provided the firm basis on which the achievement of the third protocol was built. It dealt with more than half of the 5,735 aircraft sent by all supply routes in this period,[10] and, as mentioned above, always offered the prospect of taking an even greater proportion of supplies should the other supply routes fail.

Thanks to this, and the resumption of the northern convoys and the resurgence of the Pacific route with the arctic thaw in spring 1944, protocol commitments from the United States were more than fulfilled. Although, because of the problems of finding suitable shipping and port facilities, some items of heavy equipment, such as tanks, trucks and locomotives, fell into arrears,[11] the total tonnage shipped was more than promised. Ship-

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1 Motter, p. 202.
2 Ibid., p. 264.
3 Ibid., p. 264.
4 Ibid., p. 270.
5 Ibid., pp. 507-8.
6 Ibid., pp. 356-9.
7 Ibid., p. 270.
8 Ibid., pp. 325-6.
9 Ibid., appendix A.
10 Ibid., p. 264.
11 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 682-3.

ments in 1943 as a whole were nearly 200 per cent of those of the previous year[1] and the third protocol schedule of 5,100,000 short tons was exceeded by almost 25 per cent by 30 June 1944.[2]

The British also exceeded their commitments - at least in terms of military supplies. The sent an extra 36 Valentine tanks and 25 bridge layers to be used with these vehicles. They shipped 159 lorries, 955 motor cycles and 4 anti-aircraft guns in addition to the original protocol commitment. Like the Americans, the British fulfilled their aircraft commitment too, even though the Russian rejection of the Hurricanes had disrupted their planning. There was, however, a shortfall of 110 Airacobras despatched from the United States on the United Kingdom's account.[3] Britain's programme of industrial equipment for the Soviet Union also fell behind schedule because of manpower shortages, interference from operational requirements and a certain amount of design and inspection difficulties.[4]

There is no doubt that the Allied performance impressed the Russians. From late 1943 onwards they were prodigal by previous standards with their praise of the British and American effort. Stalin's speech on the anniversary of the revolution in November 1943 declared:

> Taking together the blows struck at the Germans and their allies in North Africa and Southern Italy, the intensive bombing of Germany . . . and the regular supplies of armaments and raw materials that we are receiving from our Allies, we must say that all this has greatly helped our summer campaign.[5]

Further, at his meeting with Churchill and Roosevelt at Teheran in November and December 1943, Stalin praised American production, saying that without it the war would have been lost.[6] There were regular publications in the Soviet press in the first months of 1944 describing the Lend-Lease aid given to the U.S.S.R. The statistics released by the Foreign Economic Administration of the United States in January and February were given considerable coverage. This included the claim that three and a half billion

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1 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, IV (Washington, 1966), p. 1056.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 678.
3 ASE(45)4, 20 Jan. 1945, CAB 92/9. (See appendix A at the conclusion of the chapter).
4 Letter from G. W. Turner (M/Supply) to Sir Robert Sinclair (MOP), 8 May 1944, BT 28/113A, PP/31.
5 Werth, pp. 678-9.
6 Sherwood, The White House Papers, vol. 2, p. 787.

dollars worth of supplies had been provided under Lend-Lease from the United States - 7,800 aircraft, 4,700 tanks, 170,000 trucks and automobiles and 25,000 other military machines made up part of this.[1] Britain's contribution was also acknowledged in the Soviet Union with the publication of Churchill's statement to the House of Commons in May 1944 which detailed the military, civil and medical supplies made available to the Russians from 1 October 1941 to 31 March 1944 (see appendix C at conclusion of chapter). Great Britain had supplied, the Soviet press admitted,[2] 5,031 tanks (1,223 of which were built in Canada), 4,020 lorries, 2,463 armoured carriers (1,348 from Canada), 6,778 aircraft, £77,185,000 worth of civil stores and £3,047,725 worth of medical supplies raised by charitable organizations.

Soviet praise reached a crescendo at the time of the Allied invasion of France in June 1944. Stalin's May 1 Order of the Day praised Britain and America not only for 'deflecting from us a considerable proportion of the German troops' but also for 'supplying us with most valuable strategic raw materials and armaments'.[3] On the anniversary of the Anglo-Soviet treaty on 26 May 1944 Allied aid was further praised and actually given editorial comment in the Soviet press.[4] Previously the newspapers had confined themselves simply to reporting statistics of aid published by the Western nations. In June Molotov gave a banquet in honour of the Master Lend-Lease agreement between the United States and the U.S.S.R., and details of Allied aid occupied three-quarters of the front page space on Moscow papers on 11 June.[5] 'The Soviet people value this assistance highly', the authoritative Pravda said,[6] and Soviet radio also broadcast statistics of Allied aid.[7] This, as Clark Kerr said, was 'the most generous publicity ever given' and showed 'how far we have moved since Standley's outburst of last year'.[8] Even on the anniversary of the Soviet-German war the official press found time to congratulate its allies. The United States of America

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1 FRUS, 1943, III, p. 798; FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 1056.
2 Summary of Moscow daily press, collected by British embassy, Moscow (in possession of Dr G. Bolsover, School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, University of London).
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 FRUS, 1944, IV, pp. 884-5.
6 Summary of Moscow press.
7 Text of Soviet Monitor, 11 June 1944, FO 371 43275 N3613/25/38.
8 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 1584, 13 June 1944, FO 371 43726 N3659/25/38.

and Great Britain, the Soviet Monitor, issued by Tass Agency, said on 22 June,

> have considerably contributed to the successes of the Red Army by supplying us with very valuable strategic raw materials and armaments, systematically bombing military objectives in Germany and thereby undermining the latter's military might.

The bulletin went on to praise 'the brilliantly executed invasion of Northern France' and 'the successful offensive of the Allied troops in Italy'.[1]

In the same period the Soviet government liberally bestowed awards on Allied military leaders and many of the personnel involved in the production and delivery of protocol supplies. Beaverbrook, Lyttelton, Admiral Tovey, Generals Brooke, Marshall, Eisenhower and Alexander - to name but some - were given the highest Soviet honour of the Order of Suvorov, First Class.[2] Officers and crews of both the American and the British navies were given lesser awards 'for valour and fortitude displayed in bringing armaments from the United States to the Soviet Union'.[3] Further honours were showered on Connolly and his subordinates 'for the successful fulfilment of the instructions of the American Command in the Persian Gulf in transporting munitions supplies and foodstuffs to the Soviet Union which have provided great assistance to the Red Army'.[4] Hopkins and other officials in Washington would also have been honoured by the Soviet government had not the Russians been restrained by a regulation of Congress forbidding the acceptance of medals by U.S. civilian authorities.[5] Harriman, since October 1943 U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, judged this spate of awards to be 'official concrete recognition of the Soviet Government's appreciation of the value they have placed on Lend-Lease shipments',[6] and certainly the Soviet actions exonerate them from the indiscriminate post-war charge that they never expressed thanks for Allied supplies.

Indeed the gratitude of the Kremlin for Allied help at this time was so obvious that it vindicated the assumption on which Allied supply policy had been based for nearly three years.

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1 FO 371 43362 N3934/477/38.
2 Stalin to PM, T.1517/4, 26 July 1944, PREM 3 393/12. FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 834; summary of Moscow press.
3 Summary of Moscow press, 19 Feb. 1944.
4 FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 861.
5 FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 835.
6 Ibid., p. 828.

Washington and to a lesser degree London had calculated that their adhering to a generous commitment regardless of Russian reserve and at times abuse would bring both military and political returns. The easing of restraint and suspicion during the third protocol period justified this hope. Not only did the Soviet government publicly admit its indebtedness to the West, but it agreed to allow the United States to operate shuttle-bombing against European targets from its own territory.[1] Undoubtedly there were reasons other than the flow of Allied supplies for this Soviet cordiality. The Russians were more self-assured with spectacular victories to their credit; they were being taken into Allied counsels on questions of post-war European organization; and they were anticipating the long-desired invasion of France. Nonetheless the role of the protocol must not be ignored. For there were many issues still tending to divide the governments of the three Powers. The euphoria of the meeting at Teheran did not last for long and was soon dimmed by some suspicion and unease, particularly over Eastern Europe. On 17 January 1944 the Soviet government attacked the British through the official organ, Pravda, claiming that it had evidence of secret Anglo-German negotiations.[2] Soon after, the American, Wendell Willkie, was also attacked savagely in Pravda for questioning the intentions of the Soviet Union towards the countries adjoining her.[3] Britons and Americans alike began to question Soviet ambitions. Even though the Kremlin was co-operating wholeheartedly in preparations for post-war organizations,[4] its support for communist movements in Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia was disquieting.[5] So also was its unilateral recognition of the Italian government on 13 March 1944[6] and the steady deterioration throughout that year in Russo-Polish relations. Except for a brief respite in May and June the Kremlin was unrelenting in this period in its pressure on the London-based Polish government to recognize publicly the Curzon line as the Soviet-Polish border and to reconstitute itself in a form more sympathetic to the Soviet Union.[7]

'I confess to a growing apprehension', Foreign Secretary Eden said

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1 For a full account of this see, Deane, The Strange Alliance, passim.

2 Sir Llewellin Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, vol. III, pp. 106-8.

3 Werth, pp. 690-1; Hull, Memoirs, vol. 2, p. 1437.

4 Hull, p. 1436.

5 Woodward, III, p. 119.

6 Hull, p. 1449.

7 Woodward, III, pp. 154-202.

on 4 April 1944, 'that Russia has vast aims, and that these include the domination of Eastern Europe and even the Mediterranean and the communizing of much that remains'.[1] Churchill, too, concerned at the situation developing in Eastern Europe in the middle of 1944, declared on 4 May,

> Broadly speaking the issue is: are we going to acquiesce in the Communisation of the Balkans and perhaps of Italy? I am of the opinion on the whole that we ought to come to a definite conclusion about it, and that if our conclusion is that we resist the Communist infusion and invasion we should put it to them pretty plainly at the best moment that military events permit.[2]

Nonetheless the differences between East and West had by no means hardened into the direct clash of interests of the Cold War years, and there was still much confidence that the Soviet Union and its allies could find a modus vivendi.[3] There were also many indications in the early part of 1944 that the Kremlin attached great importance to co-operation with its allies.[4] In these circumstances the continuation of Allied supplies was of considerable value. It provided continuity when the whole balance of political relations and the future of the wartime alliance was uncertain. It was a gage of Allied goodwill when the points of contention between East and West were manifold. Perhaps its greatest merit was that, in concentrating increasingly on supplies for reconstruction and rehabilitation, it assured the Russians that its allies cared not only for its power to destroy the German army but for its future recovery from devastation and war. The significance which the Kremlin attached to this became clear when, in the negotiations for the fourth protocol, the Allies' generosity began to pall.

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1 Woodward, III, p. 109.
2 Ibid., pp. 115-6.
3 Ibid., p. 119; Hull, p. 1459.
4 For instance, when the British ambassador approached MM. Litvinov, Maisky and Dekanosov (Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs) about the Pravda report, the Russians expressed complete satisfaction with the state of Anglo-Soviet relations (Woodward, III, p. 109). Harriman also remained confident throughout 1944 that the Kremlin, although it expected to be able to dictate conditions from its position of political and military strength, placed the highest importance on its new association with the West (Hull, p. 1460).

Appendix A to chapter six

THE FULFILMENT OF THE THIRD PROTOCOL: MILITARY SUPPLIES (TO 30 JUNE 1944)*

Item	Commitment in third protocol	Despatched	In transit	Lost at sea	Arrived	Remarks
Tanks						
UK Valentine	1,000	1,036	-	26	1,010	
Canadian Valentine	-	175	-	10	165	part of second protocol backlog
Cromwell IV	-	6	6	-	-	requested by Russians in April 1944**
Valentine bridge layer	-	25	-	-	25	
Carriers	-	103	4	4	95	second protocol backlog in part
Wheeled vehicles						
Machinery lorries	-	83	8	-	75	extra-protocol
3-ton Ford lorries	-	64	-	-	64	
30-ton Ford lorries	-	12	-	-	12	
motor cycles	-	955	10	10	935	
A/A guns						
4.5 in.	-	4	-	-	4	
3.7 in.	-	4	-	-	4	
40 mm	-	4	-	-	4	
Aircraft						
Hurricanes	651 (incl. 51 from second protocol)	461	-	20	441	including 71 rejected by Russians
Spitfires		190	154	-	36	
Hurricanes	-	82	30	-	52	replacements for rejected Hurricanes
Airacobras	-	126	-	3	123	towards second protocol backlog

* Source: CAB 92/9, ASE(45)4, 20 Jan. 1945.
** Grigg to Lyttelton, n.d., FO 371 43273 N2502/25/38; Foy to MOP, 2 May, 1944, ibid., N2809/25/28.

FULFILMENT OF THIRD PROTOCOL: MILITARY SUPPLIES*

Item	Commitment in third protocol	Despatched	In transit	Lost at sea	Arrived	Remarks
Airacobras	1,800	1,690	78	33	1,579	
Mosquito	-	1			1	extra-protocol

* Shipments of raw materials proceeded satisfactorily except in the case of wool which, because of the Russian failure to ship it from the western seaboard of the United States, ground to a standstill over the winter of 1943-1944. The W.S.A. provided shipping for wool from the Dominions to the United States, but the Russians then chose to give priority to other supplies (CAB 92/8, ASE(44)2, 10 Jan. 1944; minute by Mr. Foy, 6 Apr. 1944, FO 371 43272 N2287/25/38).

Appendix B to chapter six

During the period covered by the third protocol (July 1943 to June 1944), the British contribution to the Soviet war effort was augmented by the loan of several warships and submarines. This came about because of the Russian desire to be allocated, as one of the principal members of the anti-Axis coalition, a proportion of the Italian fleet. This surrendered to the British at Malta early in September 1943, and Stalin asked at the Foreign Ministers' conference in the following month for 1 battleship, 1 cruiser, 8 destroyers and 4 submarines for use in north Russia; he also requested 40,000 tons of merchant shipping for the Black Sea.[1]

The Chiefs of Staff had considerable reservations about this proposal. Although they accepted in principle the Soviet claim for compensation,[2] the Italian vessels in question were assisting Allied operations in the Mediterranean. Italian personnel were also doing valuable work at the Taranto dockyards and it was feared they might scuttle or sabotage ships needed for 'Overlord' and the invasion of southern France, 'Anvil', if faced with a unilateral transfer of ships to the Soviet Union. The naval vessels were unsuited to Arctic conditions without substantial modification, and the merchant vessels were unable to use the Black Sea since it was still closed to shipping. Furthermore the British feared that, if the Russians were granted some portion of the Italian fleet, there might be other claims from French, Yugoslav and the Greek representatives, all of whom had suffered at the hands of the Italians. The British also felt that their own claim for the more modern Italian battleships was superior to the Russians' because of the 'overwhelming contribution' of the British armed forces to the Mediterranean campaign.[3]

Nonetheless the Cabinet did agree in principle during the Moscow conference to the Russians having a 'reasonable' share of the Italian fleet.[4] It hoped, in view of operational considerations and the inaccessibility of the Black Sea, to defer the transfer of these ships until after the invasion of northern and southern France. President Roosevelt, however, promised Stalin at the Teheran conference in December one third of the Italian fleet, and this as soon as possible after 1 February 1944.[5] One third was a considerably

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1 Churchill, V, p. 402.
2 COS(43)261st mtg (O), min. 9, 27 Oct. 1943, CAB 79/67.
3 Churchill, V, pp. 262-3.
4 Ibid., p. 263.
5 Ibid., p. 402; CAB 80/77, COS(43)785(O), 22 Dec. 1943.

larger proportion than the Russians had previously requested — 1 or 2 battleships, 2 or 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 6 torpedo boats, 6 corvettes and 10 submarines, in fact[1] — but the President's promise put the British under considerable pressure to agree to the immediate transfer of some vessels. They therefore offered on 23 January 1944 to lend the Russians one battleship, the Royal Sovereign, a cruiser and 20,000 tons of merchant shipping, with the hope that the United States would provide a further 20,000 tons of shipping on loan. This offer was in lieu of the Italian ships which would be transferred as soon as operational and political considerations allowed.[2]

Stalin, however, made it clear on 29 January that he would consider such an offer a breach of the Teheran agreement. He accepted the Allied offer, but requested as well that the British and Americans should lend the Soviet Union destroyers and submarines in place of similar Italian vessels.[3] Churchill therefore went the further mile, despite the reluctance of the Chiefs of Staff to improve on the original offer.[4]

> I was vexed by the harsh tone of Stalin's message about the Italian ships (the Prime Minister cabled Clark Kerr on 5 February). Nevertheless I have tried my utmost to comply with his demands and make good what was promised at Teheran. I could not get anything more from the Americans who say their forces are all needed in the Pacific. I have therefore persuaded the Admiralty to provide eight British destroyers and four British submarines on loan until the Italian substitutes can be procured. It was very difficult.[5]

This arrangement satisfied the Russians, even though the vessels the British offered were old. The transfer was duly carried out with some delay in the hand-over of the destroyers caused by the invasion of France.[6] Regrettably one of the submarines was sunk en route to north Russia by an over-zealous Coastal Command.[7]

After the war the Russians returned the ships as arranged, while the Italian vessels were transferred to them 'in a manner acceptable to all concerned'.[8]

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1 COS(43)785(O), loc. cit.
2 Churchill, V, pp. 404-5.
3 Ibid., pp. 405-6.
4 COS(44)31st mtg(O), 2 Feb. 1944, CAB 79/70.
5 PM to Ambassador Clark Kerr, no number, 5 Feb. 1944, ADM 205/35.
6 Churchill, V, p. 406.
7 Letter to Sinclair from A. V. Alexander, 20 Oct. 1944, FO 371 43281 N6566/25/38.
8 Churchill, V, p. 407.

Appendix C to chapter six

SUPPLIES TO U.S.S.R. DESPATCHED BETWEEN 1ST OCTOBER, 1941, TO 31ST MARCH, 1944.*

1. MILITARY SUPPLIES

(a) Armaments and Military Stores

Tanks. Since October, 1941, 5,031 tanks have been supplied, of which 1,223 were Canadian built.

Vehicles. (includes lorries and ambulances) 4,020.

Machinery lorries. 216.

Bren Carriers and Starters and Chargers. 2,463 (including 1,348 from Canada).

Motor Cycles. 1,706

Weapons.
- 800 P.I.A.T., with ammunition.
- 103 Thompson sub-machine guns.
- 636 2-pdr. anti-tank guns.
- 96 6-pdr. anti-tank guns.
- 3,200 Boys anti-tank rifles.
- 2,487 Bren guns.
- 581 7.92 m.m. Besa guns.

Ammunition.

85,000	rounds	P.I.A.T.
19,346,000	"	.45-in. machine gun.
2,591,000	"	2-pdr. anti-tank gun.
409,000	"	6-pdr. " " "
1,761,000	"	.55" Boys anti-tank rifle.
75,134,000	"	.303-in. rifle.
51,211,000	"	7.92 mm. tank gun, Besa.

G.L. Equipment.
- (a) Mark II; 302 sets.
- (b) Mark III; 15 sets British.
- 29 sets Canadian.

Cable. 30,227 miles telephone cable.

(b) Naval Supplies.

- 9 Mine-sweeping trawlers.
- 3 Motor mine-sweepers.
- 102 Asdics.
- 3,006 Mines.
- 50 Vickers 130 mm. guns.
- 603 Anti-aircraft machine guns.
- 40 Submarine Batteries.

(c) Aircraft (Fighters)

Total despatched 6,778 aircraft, including 2,672 aircraft sent from U.S.A. These were sent on United States Lend/Lease to U.S.S.R., as part of the British commitment, in exchange for a supply of British aircraft to U.S. forces in the European theatre.

2. RAW MATERIALS, FOODSTUFFS, MACHINERY AND INDUSTRIAL PLANT.

(a) Raw Materials.

The greater part of these supplies have been bought from Empire sources. Over the last 2½ years we have sent:-

30,000	tons	of aluminium	from Canada	(£3,038,000)
2,000	"	"	" United Kingdom	(£720,000)
27,000	"	" copper	" Canada	(£1,431,000)
10,000	"	"	" United Kingdom	(£620,000)
$4,672,000	worth of Industrial Diamonds, mainly from African production			(£1,168,000)
80,924	tons	of jute from India		(£3,687,000)
81,423	"	" rubber from the Far East and Ceylon		(£9,911,000)
8,550	"	" sisal from British East Africa		(£194,000)
3,300	"	" graphite from Ceylon		(£160,000)
28,050	"	" tin from Malaya and United Kingdom		(£7,774,000)
29,610	"	" wool from Australia and New Zealand		(£5,521,000)

TOTAL VALUE of these and other raw materials: £39,115,000.

(b) Foodstuffs. These include:

Tea from Ceylon and India; Cocoa beans, palm oil and palm kernels from West Africa; groundnuts from India; cocoanut oil from Ceylon; pepper and spices from India, Ceylon and British West Indies.

TOTAL VALUE of all foodstuffs supplied: £7,223,000.

(c) Machine Tools, Industrial Plant and Machinery.

These form the principal direct contribution from United Kingdom production to civil supplies for the U.S.S.R. Since the entry of Russia into the war, the following have been provided:-

Machine Tools	£8,218,000
Power Plant	£4,250,000
Electrical Equipment	£3,314,000
Miscellaneous Industrial Equipment	£1,980,000
Various types of machinery (e.g. Telephone equipment, food processing plant, textile machinery, port and salvage equipment)	£3,019,000

TOTAL VALUE OF (c) £20,781,000.

GRAND TOTAL OF CIVIL STORES MADE AVAILABLE TO U.S.S.R. BY THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM ALL SOURCES £77,185,000

3. MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND COMFORTS.

The public have contributed some of the funds for these supplies. Since October, 1941, £3,047,725 has been spent through charitable organisations on surgical and medical items and clothing. In addition, His Majesty's Government have made a grant of £2,500,000 for clothing, nearly all of which has been spent.

* Source: PREM 3 401/21.

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The amity which characterized the last months of the third supply protocol regrettably did not last for long. For in the ten months of the fourth protocol the questions about the future of the wartime alliance which were already dominating the political scene early in 1944 encroached onto the programme of Allied supplies. On the one hand, Soviet actions in Europe led some in the West to question the legitimacy of Russian claims for aid, particularly after the tragedy of the Warsaw uprising in August and September 1944. On the other, the approaching end of the war in Europe challenged the whole raison d'etre of the supply protocols. Their original intention had been to assist in the defeat of Germany, and as far as the fourth protocol served this purpose, the Allied governments accepted the need for it without question. The Red Army's support was obviously essential during the Allies' battle to establish themselves on the Continent of Europe in the second half of 1944, and Stalin had agreed at Teheran that once the conflict in Europe was over, Soviet troops would enter the war against Japan. The United States' government in particular therefore could see continuing merit in providing military supplies under the Lend-Lease terms of the past.

Civil supplies, however, were another matter. These now formed the major part of the Soviet Union's demands on the West and towards these the governments of Great Britain, the United States and Canada adopted an increasingly critical stance. The supplies the Russians requested for reconstruction and rehabilitation made no direct contribution to the waging of the war; many of them could not be produced until a date well after even the most pessimistic estimates for the end of the war in Europe; furthermore civil supplies occupied industrial resources which Britain in particular wished to divert to her own peacetime recovery. The feeling therefore grew in the West that the civil side of the supply programme should be normalized in anticipation of post-war commerce. This, however, the Soviet government resisted. Understandably, it wished to perpetuate the disinterestedness of the supply protocols into trading relations after the war. While the military struggle continued, it sought to secure unprecedentedly generous terms of repayment and credit for post-war supplies. These the Western governments for their own domestic and financial reasons refused

to supply, with the result that deadlock ensued. The signing of the fourth protocol was delayed from the normal date in October to less than one month before the surrender of the German armed forces in May 1945. In consequence the protocol series ended not with the consensus that the Western nations had always sought and recently won, but with the more familiar recrimination, disappointment and dissent.

The spectre of the imminent end to the war in Europe haunted the fourth protocol negotiations from the very start. At first the British and Americans themselves disagreed about the form the final protocol should take and the length of the period it should cover. In January 1944 the Americans wished simply to ask the Soviet representatives to state their needs over the period 1 July 1944 to 30 June 1945 in the same categories used in previous supply agreements; but the British government, believing the war in Europe would be over before the end of the year, objected. It argued that it would be misleading to imply a similarity between the fourth and third protocols, when the circumstances were likely to change drastically. It shied from any approach which might leave it in the position of subsidising the Soviet Union's peacetime reconstruction when the war in Europe had ended. Washington, however, intent on enticing the Red Army into the Japanese conflict, thought London's anxiety premature. For administrative and political reasons it pressed for immediate action. Already by February the protocol negotiations were lagging in comparison with those of previous years, and it was regrettable, the Americans thought, to give the Russians the impression that the West had no use for them after the end of the European conflict.[1] The British authorities therefore, as so often before, had to bow to the wishes of Washington. On 2 February they agreed to the despatch of letters from the three protocol suppliers to the Soviet representatives, although they specifically excluded from their own letter any suggestion that the Russians use the procedures of previous years.[2] Later too they prevailed upon Washington to include in the introductory paragraph to the fourth protocol the assurance that civil and military supplies were intended to assist the Russians 'in meeting their

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1 Minutes of the 4th mtg (1944) of the British Supply Council, 26 Jan. 1944, NAS (44) 11, CAB 92/34.
2 Minutes of 5th mtg of British Supply Council, 2 Feb. 1944, NAS (44) 12, CAB 92/34.

war needs'.[1] The 'escape clause', however, the A.S.E. agreed to leave without any reference to the possibility of the surrender of Germany. Though eager to safeguard its own position in such circumstances, it feared conveying to the Kremlin the impression that Britain did not expect Soviet participation in the war against Japan.[2]

The Soviet government, however, was obviously aware that the supply programme and the circumstances which governed it would have to change in the coming twelve months. In May it moved to safeguard it own position with the result that the decision on the fourth protocol was further delayed. The feature of the protocol which the Kremlin chose to challenge was the terms under which it paid the United Kingdom for civil supplies and raw materials. Unlike the majority of military supplies these had never been provided free of charge. The Anglo-Soviet Financial Agreement for Military Assistance of 27 June 1942 had demanded payment from the Russians in dollars only for those military supplies for which the British had themselves paid dollars, while those goods which the United Kingdom had secured under Lend-Lease terms from the United States were transferred to the Soviet Union in such a manner as would bring 'neither profit nor loss to the British Government'.[3] Civil supplies and raw materials on the other hand were governed by the financial agreement negotiated by Sir Stafford Cripps and the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, Mikoyan, on 16 August 1941. This bound the Soviet government to pay 40 per cent of the cost of raw materials and civil equipment from Great Britain in cash. The remaining 60 per cent was covered by a three to seven year credit from the British government. This was originally set at a limit of £10 million sterling[4] but when this ceiling was reached, was increased by two further offers of £25 million sterling, one in June 1942,[5] the other nearly two years later early in 1944.

This latter offer, in the midst of discussions about the fourth protocol and post-war trade, provoked the Russians to protest. On 8 May the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs accepted the £25

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1 ASE(44)2nd mtg, 15 June 1944, ASE(44)45, 4 Aug. 1944, CAB 92/8.
2 ASE(44)2nd mtg, loc. cit.
3 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 164, 11 July 1942, FO 371 32951 N3976/295/38.
4 Appendix III to WP(42)417, PREM 3 401/7.
5 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 43, 30 June 1942, FO 371 32951 N3399/295/38.

million credit but informed the Commercial Secretary in Moscow that the terms of the 1941 agreement were too onerous for the future. He requested instead that post-war trade be covered by more generous credit over a longer period.[1] By this, it soon emerged, he meant a period of ten to thirty years,[2] during which the interest which the Soviet government would pay on both protocol and post-war supplies would be reduced to a percentage even lower than the 3 per cent presently paid.[3]

Even had it wished to, the British government was in no position to provide such credit. In the middle of 1944 it was already feeling the strain of its own immense financial difficulties which had resulted from the enforced profligacy of the war. It was facing the consequences of the past five years in which, in the words of J. Maynard Keynes, it had thrown 'good house-keeping to the winds' and indulged in 'financial imprudence which has no parallel in history'.[4] By 30 June 1944 the United Kingdom had parted with overseas assets to the extent of £1,000,000,000 and had undischarged liabilities of £2,000,000,000.[5] To meet these debts and to provide for the future Britain had to quintuple her current level of exports and raise her 1938 level by 150 per cent.[6] Yet in 1944, given the diversion of manpower and productive resources to the war effort, British exports were less than one third of their pre-war level.[7] Her foreign currency reserves had in fact improved in 1943 and 1944 with the stationing of U.S. troops in the United Kingdom[8] but this had been offset by the obligation to provide reciprocal aid for these troops in support of the principle of a 'common pool' of Allied resources.[9] Moreover, the British government had no guarantee in mid-1944 that the United States would continue to adopt a generous approach to its economic problems when the war had ended. Washington had been increasingly rigorous in its examination of Lend-Lease requests since the beginning of

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1 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 1224, 10 May 1944, FO 371 43351 N2843/302/38.
2 FO to W'ton, no. 157 MOSSY, 11 Oct. 1944, FO 371 43279 N5255/25/38.
3 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 1716, 28 June 1944, FO 371 43352 N4000/302/38.
4 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 445.
5 Chancellor of the Exchequer in Budget speech, quoted in FO to Moscow, no. 1937, 30 June 1944, FO 371 43352 N3428/302/38.
6 R. S. Sayers, Financial Policy 1939-1945 (London: HMSO, 1956), p. 469.
7 Duncan Hall, p. 445.
8 Sayers, p. 470n.
9 Duncan Hall, p. 446.

1943,[1] and London feared that this would worsen in the period between the surrender of Germany and the collapse of Japan - the period called in financial discussions, Stage II. In mid-1944 furthermore the British could not be sure that the United States would continue to supply munitions and civil goods on a scale which would allow them to convert some of their own industry to reconstruction during the Japanese war.[2] Nor were they confident that the U.S. Treasury would adopt a sympathetic attitude to its ally's financial liabilities.

Consequently when the Soviet government asked for long-term credit in May 1944 the United Kingdom was unable to respond. It could not perpetuate any longer the generosity of the protocols which had been inspired by an unprecedented military crisis and which, as Orme Sargent of the Foreign Office astutely recognized, had been the last and somewhat heroic gesture of a 'rich man's complex', made anachronistic by the war:

> in future (Sargent wrote on 1 June) we shall have to adapt our diplomacy to the requirements and capacity of a debtor country. In fact, the instruments at the disposal of a creditor country, such as loans, credits and subsidies, will no longer be at our disposal. This will mean in many cases that we shall have to find a new approach to our international problems and develop a new technique in keeping with the vastly different economic and financial role which we shall from now onwards have to play in world affairs as compared with the rôle which we had so successfully elaborated during the Victorian era and still tried, though with increasing difficulty, to fill up to the present war.[3]

Nonetheless for the very reason that their economic propects were so dire, the British felt obliged to make some response to the Soviet request for credit. With their need for receipts from exports one of 'life and death',[4] they had at all costs to avoid letting their trade with the Soviet Union in heavy electrical and engineering goods lapse. The Treasury therefore, even though the Foreign Secretary argued strongly that the 'Russians can afford to pay. Why shouldn't they?',[5] offered the Soviet Union a further <u>short-term</u> credit. This was made available by the diversion of 50 per cent of

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1 Leighton and Coakley, <u>Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943-1945</u>, p. 630. After the autumn of 1942 the Munitions Assignment Board and the Combined Production and Resources Board exercised decreasing influence on the U.S. military requirements programme which became almost exclusively the responsibility of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the U.S. Service departments (p. 632).
2 Sayers, p. 465.
3 Minute, FO 371 43351 N2996/302/38.
4 Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget speech, loc. cit.
5 Minute, 19 June 1944, FO 371 43352 N4213/302/38.

Russian repayments under the civil supplies agreement of 1941 to the furnishing of the new loan[1] - £30 million over a six-year period. The interest rate on this, in deference to Russian sensitivity about prestige, was reduced to 2¼ per cent.[2]

However, the Soviet government, when offered this new loan on 11 September 1944, rejected it immediately. It insisted that, contrary to opinion in the West, it did not have large gold reserves and could not continue to bear the onerous financial terms of the past.[3] Three days later, the Soviet authorities went further and started to withhold payments for some £7.5 million worth of goods already delivered, declaring at the same time that they would place future orders only if these were financed wholly by long-term credit.[4] On 12 October the Soviet Trade Delegation made this official. It told the A.S.E. that it had been authorized to withdraw all non-protocol requests submitted during the third protocol for which arrangements for delivery and placement of orders were still tentative, and, more importantly, to discontinue all discussions relating to the provision of industrial equipment and raw materials under the fourth protocol.[5]

The British could not meet this ultimatum. Despite the fact that at the Anglo-American meeting in Quebec in September, Roosevelt had accepted the need to maintain Lend-Lease in Stage II at a level which would allow some easement of the plight of the British civilian,[6] the United Kingdom's financial situation remained serious. There were

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1 FO to Moscow, no. 1937, 30 June 1944, FO 371 43352 N3428/302/38.
2 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 2413 WREST, 13 Sept. 1944, FO 371 43353 N5590/302/38; minute by Mr. Wilson (FO), 19 Aug. 1944, 43353 N4975/302/38.
3 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 2413 WREST, loc. cit. The United States believed that the Soviet Union had $4 billion in gold in June 1944 and an annual production of $300-400 million of gold. Russian reticence to admit this was apparently partly attributable to their reluctance to acknowledge how many prisoners-of-war had been working the Soviet gold mines (Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries, p. 263, 263n).
4 Draft paper for submission to Cabinet by F. S., Chancellor, President of the Board of Trade and Minister of Production, 26 Jan. 1945, FO 371 47835 N1025/1/38. This cites figure of £17 million for the payments outstanding, but as a letter from the Treasury to the Ministry of Production of 1 Feb. 1945 pointed out, invoices had been presented to Moscow for only £7.5 million (N1414/1/38).
5 ASE to W'ton, no. 155 MOSSY, 11 Oct. 1944, FO 371 43279 N5255/25/38.
6 Sayers, p. 469.

signs that Washington might finally be beginning to realize this - thanks largely to the brilliance of John Maynard Keynes in negotiation -[1] but there were still no formal undertakings about Stage II of the kind London wished.[2] After three months of deadlock the British government had no choice but to accept the decision of the Russians, communicated formally on 9 January 1945, to cancel all orders for civil equipment in the fourth protocol. This left only munitions and medical supplies, which were free of charge, and raw materials which Soviet industry particularly needed, in the British protocol schedule.[3]

Disappointing though this was both politically and commercially, the A.S.E. welcomed it; for by January 1945 when the Russians made their decision final, the signature of the fourth protocol was already much delayed. Nine months had passed since the Soviet government had submitted its requirements for the fourth protocol from the United Kingdom,[4] and it was three months after the customary date for the public announcement of the supply agreement. Moreover the Soviet government had apparently completed negotiations with the United States, and the A.S.E. feared that Britain might be conspicuously isolated as the Americans, Canadians and Russians independently ratified their parts of the supply programme.[5]

In fact this was an unfounded fear; for the United States had by no means resolved the problems it too had met in the protocol negotiations. In May 1944 it had approached the Soviet authorities on the question of what was to happen to some categories of civil supplies in the protocol when war ended.[6] These included the $481,807,000 worth of oil refineries, power plants and other capital equipment which would take at least eighteen months to produce or which had a long period of useful life.[7] Even though the United States was prepared, as in the past, to provide civil equipment for the Soviet war effort under the terms of the Master Lend-Lease Agreement of 11 June 1942, the State Department wanted a Soviet undertaking to purchase those items obviously intended

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1 Sayers, p. 470n.
2 Ibid.
3 War Cab. Offices to W'ton, no. 7 MOSSY, 17 Jan. 1945, FO 371 47834 N106/1/38.
4 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 86 MOSSY, 21 Apr. 1944, FO 371 43271 N2046/25/38.
5 ASE(45)1st mtg, min. 2, 2 Jan. 1945, CAB 92/9.
6 FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 1088.
7 Financial clauses of fourth protocol, 18 Apr. 1945, FO 371 47839 N4787/1/38.

for post-war reconstruction.[1] It wished also for the Soviet Union to agree to procure on credit any supplies covered by the fourth protocol and under contract but not delivered before the end of the war.[2] The Soviet government in fact accepted in principle that it should pay for such goods; but it disputed for some time what interest it should pay on the credit provided for this purpose. The Americans would not offer an interest rate lower than 2⅜ per cent on a thirty-year loan;[3] the Russians wanted 2 per cent,[4] which was lower even than the rate at which the U.S. government borrowed.[5] The dispute continued until September 1944 when the Russian representatives returned to Moscow with what the United States 'flatly stated' was its final offer. 'Silence descended on the matter' until January 1945.[6]

Then on 4 January the Soviet ambassador in Washington, A. Gromyko, announced to the Secretary of State that his government accepted the proposals of the United States 'concerning the signature of the Fourth Protocol'.[7] But the appearance of consensus was deceptive. The ambassador also requested in the same letter that the United States should accept Soviet orders for industrial equipment[8] even though agreement on the terms of payment for these had not yet been reached. Furthermore on 3 January Molotov submitted to Harriman in Moscow a proposal for a large post-war loan. This, the Foreign Commissar suggested, should amount to credit of $6 billion over a thirty year period at an interest rate of 2¼ per cent. He also requested a 20 per cent discount on goods ordered by the Soviet Union before the end of the war.[9] From this it was clear that the Kremlin was seeking to extend the uniquely favourable credit terms offered as part of the fourth protocol to all post-war trade and credit.[10] This the United States could not countenance. Although there was considerable eagerness, particularly within the Treasury,[11] to offer the Soviet Union a generous post-war loan, there was also universal agreement that this must be kept distinct from the fourth protocol.[12]

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 680.
2 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. V (Washington, 1967), p. 954.
3 FRUS, 1945, V, p.955.
4 FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 1135.
5 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 958.
6 Ibid., p. 955.
7 Ibid., p. 941.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., pp. 942-3.
10 Ibid., p. 949.
11 Ibid., p. 948; Blum, pp. 304-6.
12 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 953.

For one thing the U.S. administration lacked the legal authority at that time to grant post-war credit. The Congress alone possessed this power, and, it was thought, might favour using agencies such as the Export and Import Bank or the bank established at the Bretton Woods conference of June-July 1944 rather than specific credits for individual countries.[1] To add to this there was considerable uncertainty about the size of the loan the Soviet Union could service. The most optimistic estimate, Morgenthau's, put the figure at $10 billion over thirty-five years at a 2 per cent interest rate;[2] the pessimists, like George Kennan, minister-counsellor at the embassy in Moscow, felt confident about lending the Soviet Union only 1½-2 billion dollars.[3] The embassy also argued, through Ambassador Harriman, that any loan should be used as a bargaining lever in political and economic negotiations with the Russians in the future.[4]

As a result the question of credit, even for protocol supplies, remained contentious.[5] Not until 17 April 1945 was the United States able to sign the protocol, and even then all precise reference to the terms of payment for the goods in dispute was dropped. The final draft, with the agreement of the Soviet Union,[6] stated simply that such items 'will not be financed under the Lend-Lease Act, but may be purchased by the U.S.S.R. if it so elects'.[7] This was similar to the agreement which the Canadians had reached with the Soviet government some two months earlier which had stated that equipment undelivered at the cessation of hostilities would be purchased by the Soviet Union at a price and under terms yet to be

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1 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 958. Because of these legal restrictions an earlier suggestion made by Mikoyan on 1 February 1944 for a billion dollar credit at ½ per cent interest had been met with a low-keyed American response. H. Feis, Churchill Roosevelt Stalin The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought (Princeton, 1957), pp. 643-4.

2 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 948.

3 G. F. Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950 (Boston, 1967), p. 267.

4 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 946.

5 Ibid., pp. 993-4.

6 The American attitude was hardened by the discovery in spring 1945 that the Soviet government was transferring Lend-Lease goods to other countries without U.S. consent. According to Feis, Washington was also annoyed in March and April by the 'highhanded' way in which Soviet forces dealt with Romanian and Hungarian oil properties and shipping in their control (p. 647).

7 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 993.

decided.[1] In the event little of the U.S. equipment was purchased by the Russians in the post-war years because agreement on interest rates continued to be elusive.[2]

The fourth protocol was finally signed in Ottawa on 17 April 1945 to the considerable relief of all concerned in the three Western capitals. A member of the Foreign Office staff had said in February, 'we shall all be greatly relieved when this particular body is buried',[3] and indeed the protocol had raised far-reaching and intricate financial issues in a way which had proved politically awkward and diplomatically embarrassing. Fortunately, though, the constant setbacks which the protocol suffered were not as embarrassing as they might have been, for despite the long financial wranglings, the actual flow of munitions and equipment to the Soviet Union continued unchecked. There were large enough backlogs of industrial equipment ordered during the third protocol to fill shipments in the fourth protocol period. (Delivery dates for much of it had been set originally for March 1945 and production in the United Kingdom had fallen behind these schedules.)[4] Military supplies meanwhile, being unaffected by questions of payment, were made available to the Red Army in 1944 in much the same uncritical manner as before.

Not surprisingly there were some who objected to this. Even before the financial difficulties had become significant, the old argument had reappeared that the Soviet government should be asked to justify its demands. This time the advocates of this policy were the U.S. ambassador to Moscow, Harriman, and the head of the U.S. military mission, Deane. After only two months in the Soviet Union these two men, one of whom was publicly identified in the Russian mind as the father of Lend-Lease,[5] urged Washington to adopt a more critical approach to its supply programme. There were indications early in 1944 that the Soviet authorities were over-ordering on Lend-Lease and were actually accumulating valuable commodities for use after the war. Deane, for instance, found in January that diesel engines essential to the manufacture of landing craft were

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1 Earl of Halifax, no. 19 MOSSY, 9 Feb. 1945, FO 371 47834 N107/1/38.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 680.
3 Minute by Mr. Galsworthy, 5 Feb. 1945, FO 371 47835 N1146/1/38.
4 Letter from Ministry of Supply to Sir Robert Sinclair, MOP, 8 May 1944, BT 28/113A, PP/31; Memo by H. W. Hollyer (MWT), 29 Mar. 1945, MT 59/1126.
5 Deane, The Strange Alliance, p. 36.

rusting in considerable quantities on Soviet docks.[1] Such discoveries, combined with the fact that supplies for reconstruction purposes formed an increasing part of the protocol, caused Harriman to urge a change in the United States' policy. The 'time has now come', he cabled the Secretary of State on 9 January 1944, 'when we should know more about the real need for some of the Soviet requests that are being presented and unless they can be reasonably justified for the war, they should not be granted under Lend-Lease terms'.[2] A month later, with Deane's support, he suggested that the military mission in Moscow be allowed to check or screen Soviet Lend-Lease requests.[3]

There was considerable sympathy for this point of view in Washington, particularly within the War Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff; but the new approach was not adopted. As the American historians R. M. Leighton and P.W. Coakley have said, 'it proved impossible to overcome the pronounced fear of wounding Soviet sensibilities that prevailed in circles close to the President'.[4] On 14 February Roosevelt issued a directive stating that

> Russia continues to be a major factor in achieving the defeat of Germany. We must therefore continue to support the U.S.S.R. by providing the maximum amount of supplies which can be delivered to her ports. This is a matter of paramount importance.[5]

Military reservations about the fourth protocol were therefore overruled by Hopkins, Leo Crowley, head of the Foreign Economic Administration, and Edward Stettinius, Acting Secretary of State. The President's Soviet Protocol Committee told Harriman on 25 February 1944 that it would be 'inadvisable' to subject Russian requests to screening in Moscow, since the limitations on shipping still forced the Soviet government to give priority to those supplies which it badly needed. Harriman disagreed,[6] but his and Deane's protests were in vain. For one thing they lacked the support of General Marshall who, as he told Roosevelt late in March, believed that

> An important factor enabling the Soviets to seize the initiative and retain it is Lend-Lease. Lend-Lease food and transport particularly have been vital factors in Soviet success. Combat aircraft, upon which the Soviet Air Forces relied so greatly, have been furnished in relatively great numbers . . . Should there be a full stoppage it is extremely doubtful whether Russia could retain sufficiently her all-out offensive

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1 Deane, The Strange Alliance, p. 96.
2 FRUS, 1944, IV, pp. 1035-6.
3 Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning . . . 1943-44, p. 497.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 686.
5 FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 1053.
6 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 686-7.

> capability. . . . If Russia were deprived of (Lend-Lease), Germany could probably still defeat the U.S.S.R. Lend-Lease is our trump card in dealing with the U.S.S.R. and its control is probably the most effective means we have to keep the Soviets on the offensive in connection with the second front.[1]

Consequently Washington's attitude did not change, even when the callous indifference of the Kremlin to the August 1944 uprising by the Polish underground army in Warsaw soured the attitude of U.S. representatives in Moscow further.[2] Munitions continued to be provided uncritically to the Soviet Union and Deane could only complain bitterly to Marshall late in 1944, 'The situation has changed but our policy has not. We still meet their requests to the limit of our ability and they meet ours to the minimum that will keep us sweet.'[3]

In London meanwhile there had been a similar debate to the American throughout 1944 about the approach to adopt with the Soviet government; but again the impact of this on the fourth protocol was limited. Martel recommended late in January 1944 that his mission should be given the opportunity to report on the validity of new Soviet requests for munitions,[4] but the Chiefs of Staff did not agree. Although they shared his disenchantment with Russian secrecy and unco-operativeness,[5] they confined their reprisals throughout 1944 to the reduction of the information and facilities offered to Soviet representatives in London and Moscow.[6] Like the Americans, they did not press the Russians to justify their demands for munitions. Instead they continued as before to provide the maximum quantity of munitions consistent with their own operational requirements and production capacity.

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1 Matloff and Snell, p. 497.
2 See, for example, George Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1950 (London, 1953), p. 86.
3 Leighton and Coakley, p. 687.
4 Martel to COS, MIL 805, 25 Jan. 1944, ADM 199/606.
5 Brooke, for instance, was eager to press the Russians for information (COS(44)52nd mtg (O), 18 Feb. 1944, FO 371 43288 N1196/28/38), but was apparently not prepared to go as far as Martel in doing this. For this reason Martel held the C.I.G.S. to some degree responsible for the failure of his mission in Moscow. He wrote to Basil Liddell Hart on 3 Feb. 1944, ' . . . I am sure I did not upset the Russians. They were very upset when I left them and I would never have had to do so if Brookie had backed me up. I am not sure Archie Nye (Vice C.I.G.S.) did not serve things up with a twist to Brookie. Anyway the final result was Brookies (sic) fault and not Edens (sic).' (Liddell Hart correspondence).
6 COS(44)50th mtg, 9 Mar. 1944, FO 371 43288 N1742/28/38.

In the circumstances of 1944 this in fact meant that the British offered the Soviet Union far fewer munitions in the fourth protocol than ever before. The combination of reduced production through manpower shortages and increased demand from the invasion of France forced them to be less generous. In aircraft, for instance, although the Russians requested only 20 per cent more aircraft than in previous protocols, the Air Ministry felt unable to supply these; 1,200 Spitfires and 1,200 Mosquitoes was the quantity requested,[1] but production of the former during the fourth protocol period was expected to be only 5,237.[2] Of this only 300 were the type (IX H.F.) the Russians wanted,[3] while production of Mosquitoes was a meagre 2,631.[4] Meeting Soviet demands therefore would have meant surrendering approximately a quarter of Spitfire production and almost a half of Mosquito production. Not surprisingly the Air Ministry resisted this. The Secretary of State for Air argued to the A.S.E. on 22 June 1944,

> I suggest that we are not justified in maintaining the scale of our previous burdensome efforts to meet Soviet demands, in view of the relief which allied re-entry into Western Europe will undoubtedly bring to the Eastern front and the increased obligations of supply which we must face as a result.[5]

The A.S.E. agreed.[6] On intelligence estimates of six months earlier the Red Army had at least 5,000 aircraft of improving quality against 2,100 Axis aircraft, many of which were obsolete. The Russians, with 7 to 8½ million men against 4 million Germans, held 'the initiative everywhere' and had 'marked superiority on land and in the air'.[7] Therefore the A.S.E. offered the Soviet Union only 600 Spitfires in July 1944 towards the fourth protocol with the promise that the offer would be reviewed in November 1944.[8] It also offered the Russians continued supplies of Airacobras from the United States, but the Soviet Trade Delegation refused these, reiterating its preference for Spitfires and Mosquitoes.[9]

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1 ASE(44)12, 22 Apr. 1944, ASE(44)13, 1 May 1944, CAB 92/8.
2 Memorandum by Mr. Monck (WCO) to Admy, WO, AM, 29 Apr. 1944, WO 193/669.
3 ASE(44)33, 22 June 1944, CAB 92/8.
4 Monck memorandum, loc. cit.
5 ASE(44)33, loc. cit.
6 ASE(44)3rd mtg, min. 3, 7 July 1944, CAB 92/8.
7 JIC(44)21 (Final), 20 Jan. 1944, PREM 3 396/10.
8 ASE(44)33, loc. cit.; ASE(44)3rd mtg, loc. cit.
9 Letter from Borisenko to Brig. Firebrace, 26 July 1944, FO 371 43278 N4728/25/38.

Faced with this refusal, and with the fact that the campaign in France progressed more rapidly than anticipated, the Air Ministry re-examined its offer of aircraft almost immediately. The Foreign Office considered this bad tactics, in that it gave the Russian representatives the impression that pressure produced results,[1] but the A.S.E. still made a new offer in August 1944. It increased the number of Spitfires in the fourth protocol from 600 to 1,050 - 50 a month until the end of September, 100 a month from then onwards -[2] with the same rate of spare parts as in the third protocol.[3] This, as had been feared, did lead the Russians to press for more aircraft,[4] but 1,050 Spitfires was the limit of the British offer. Even this, as the A.S.E. warned the Soviet representatives in view of past experiences, included reconditioned aircraft.[5]

The situation with other British munitions in the fourth protocol was similar. There was no attempt to force the Russians to justify their requests, but the quantity the A.S.E. offered was reduced by Britain's own pressing needs. Russian radar and anti-submarine vessel requirements could have been met in full only if allocations to the Service departments had been cut 'drastically'.[6] Similarly tanks could not have been provided on the scales of earlier years without almost halving the numbers of certain types supplied to the army. Production of Cromwells, for instance, which the Russians tested at the start of the fourth protocol, was to be only 3,000 in the following twelve months. Production of Churchill tanks meanwhile, the other possible tank for the Red Army, was to be a mere 1,100.[7] The A.S.E. therefore reserved only 1,000 tanks for the Soviet Union.[8]

In fact the Red Army did not take up this offer. Presumably this was because it already had an overwhelming preponderance in

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1 Minute by Mr. Wilson, 8 Aug. 1944, N4953/25/38, ibid; see also interview between a member of the northern department and a representative of the Air Ministry, described in a minute of 9 May 1944 for the SOS, AIR 19/294.
2 ASE(44)50, 4 Sept. 1944, CAB 92/8.
3 ASE(45)25, 25 June 1945, CAB 92/9.
4 Letter Soloviev to Lyttelton, 15 Sept. 1944, FO 371 43280 N5932/25/38; Letter R. C. Foy (WCO) to Wing-Commander Horne, AM, 12 Dec. 1944, FO 371 43282 N7805/25/38.
5 AM to HQ, RAF Middle East, AX. 417, 22 Jan. 1944, AIR 19/294.
6 Monck memorandum, loc. cit.
7 Monck memorandum, loc. cit.
8 ASE(44)37, 10 July 1944, CAB 92/8.

June 1944 of 9,300 tanks to 3,500 German.[1] Furthermore the United States provided it in the fourth protocol with 3,173 Sherman (M4A2) tanks of which it already had experience in past years.[2] The British protocol offer, therefore, for the first time did not include tanks. This proved a considerable advantage for them later in 1944 when their own supplies of tanks from the United States became unreliable. The Americans, already anxious in 1944 about the possibility that they might over-produce munitions,[3] misjudged the size of the armoured reserve needed for the fighting in Europe.[4] The shortage which resulted meant that the British army received only 60 per cent of the Sherman tanks it had anticipated in 1944, and from October onwards actually had to surrender its allocation of this tank and even transfer some from British to American forces in the field.[5]

Without tanks the British fourth protocol offer was limited to aircraft, 3,000 tons of propellant, 240,000 short tons of aviation spirit, 60,000 tons of motor spirit, radar equipment, medical supplies, submarine detecting devices and six raw materials. These last included the valuable nickel and rubber,[6] but excluded aluminium which since 1943 had been provided from North America. Later in the protocol period the British did agree to supply some canned meat from their stocks when the Americans faltered on shipments of this,[7] but their usual generosity in considering extra-protocol requests was blunted by the Russian attitude to payment for civil supplies.[8]

Naturally the British offer was again outshone by that of the United States. This originally stood at 7,383,000 short tons, of which the Americans estimated that they could ship 5,400,000 short tons (including Canada's 491,371 short tons[9] of Valentine spare parts, aluminium ingots, railway, radar and industrial equipment);[10] half

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1 Field-Marshal Erich von Manstein, 'The Development of the Red Army', in B. H. L. Hart, The Soviet Army (London, 1956), p. 148. The figure for early 1945 was 13,400 tanks.
2 ASE(45)25, loc. cit.
3 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 437.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 643.
5 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 416.
6 ASE(45)25, loc. cit.
7 ASE to W'ton, no. 162 MOSSY, 4 Nov. 1944, MT 59/1125.
8 The A.S.E. ruled on 15 June 1944 that contracts should not be placed for the manufacture of Russian supplies until the Soviet authorities had accepted the prices (ASE(44)2nd mtg, min. 4, FO 371 43276 N3832/25/38).
9 Leighton and Coakley, p. 678.
10 ASE(45)25, loc. cit.

of this was to be sent via the Atlantic, half via the Pacific. The Russians, however, pressed for a shipping commitment of 7 million short tons and the W.S.A. eventually raised its offer by 300,000 short tons to 5,700,000 short tons, 2,700,000 by the Pacific and 3,000,000 by the Atlantic. In view of the demands of 'Overlord' the W.S.A. refused to make any greater commitment, although it undertook to ship more if the circumstances allowed. The Russians were given the opportunity, in accordance with past practice, to maintain a stockpile, this time of 600,000 tons, for shipment in such circumstances.[1]

Included in the American offer, in addition to a staggering $1,132,453,000 worth of machinery and equipment, were large quantities of railway material and transport vehicles. There were 9,300 jeeps and some 146,000 trucks of varying weights. Petroleum products were provided at approximately twice the rate of the protocol, while artillery tractors were also offered in larger quantities than before. There were new offerings of mobile construction equipment for roads and airports, unprecedented quantities of naval equipment, 3,173 tanks and 3,020 aircraft. Of the latter, 2,450 were fighters (P-39 and P-63) — an increase on the previous protocol of 650 — 300 were medium bombers (B-25), 240 were transport planes,(C-47) and 30 were flying boats. Light bombers for the first time were eliminated from the schedule and the Russians' request for heavy bombers and larger transport planes was again refused.[2] Food was maintained at approximately previous levels, 1.9 million tons from the United States, 0.3 million tons from Canada.[3]

These were only some of the many items the United States offered, and far from their rationale being more critically examined than in the past, their volume was actually increased as the protocol progressed. This was because from late in 1944 onwards the United States began to build up a stockpile of munitions in Siberia in anticipation of Soviet intervention in the war against Japan. These supplies had not been included in the original protocol offer because, although Stalin had promised at the Teheran conference to enter the Japanese war after VE-day, Soviet officials had stalled all efforts to start planning for this early in 1944.[4] It was only during Churchill's visit to Moscow in October 1944 that Stalin stated definitely

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 679.
2 Soviet Supply Protocols, pp. 95-146; Note on Fourth Protocol, 1 May 1944, BT 28/113A, PP/31.
3 Note on Fourth Protocol, 1 May 1944, BT 28/113A, PP/31.
4 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 688-9.

that the Red Army would take the offensive three months after Germany's defeat and that combined planning for air and naval bases in Siberia should proceed. It was then he stated also that the Red Army needed additional assistance 'in building up necessary reserve supplies'. This, it soon emerged, meant 860,410 short tons of dry cargo and 206,000 tons of liquid petroleum products over and above the existing commitments made under the fourth protocol.[1]

The United States government accepted the need for these supplies since Soviet intervention still played a large role in its strategy for the defeat of Japan. Nonetheless because of the United States's own operational requirements and the strain on shipping, the administration at first undertook to supply only 46 per cent - about 400,000 tons - of the dry cargo and all of the petroleum requirement. This excluded the locomotives, naval vessels, rolling stock, heavy trucks and the 500 transport aircraft the Russians had requested. Later, however, it was found possible to amend plans to allow the shipment of 840,000 short tons of dry cargo by the end of 1945; and at the Yalta conference of February 1945 it was also agreed that 150 transport planes should be supplied to supplement the limited rail facilities in Siberia. The whole offering, code-named 'Milepost', was added to the fourth protocol on 3 April 1945 as Annex III.[2]

Naturally this new commitment made the problem of delivering protocol supplies more difficult than it might have been; but despite this the Allies' original supply programme did continue uninterrupted. This was in the face of an acute shortage of cargo shipping which developed at the very time the 'Milepost' programme was undertaken. In the autumn of 1944 the rate of shipping construction in the United States declined as construction workers moved to employment more suited to peace-time. At the same time the Allied armies in Europe and Asia quickly outstripped the limited facilities of the ports they had captured. The result was that the rate of unloading and ship turnaround slowed down to such an extent by October 1944 the U.S. Army Service Forces had to consider reducing protocol shipments and the United Kingdom import programme.[3] 'Milepost' threatened to make the crisis more acute, particularly as President Roosevelt gave it a high priority without authorizing any corresponding cuts in protocol shipments.[4] The Russians too seemed loath

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 690.
2 Ibid., p. 691.
3 Ibid., pp. 553-4.
4 Ibid., p. 692.

to give one supply programme precedence over the other.[1] In the event however, the limitations of the Pacific route intervened to bring 'Milepost' within reasonable proportions. Ice conditions in Tartary and La Perouse Straits and congestion at Vladivostock during the winter ensured that only thirty-seven ships were transferred to the programme instead of the anticipated eighty-five. Since at the same time the shipping crisis in Europe was overcome by renewed efforts and the capture of established Channel ports, there was only one appreciable setback in protocol shipments. This was in January 1945, and was soon offset by larger shipments in the following months. By V-E day protocol shipments were well ahead of schedule, while 'Milepost', thanks to regular use of the thirty-seven ships which had been transferred to the programme, was only slightly in arrears. This backlog was more than made up in May and June 1945.[2]

This achievement owed much to the fact that, despite the shortage of shipping in the autumn, the supply routes to the Soviet Union operated smoothly. The Pacific route, its problems of the winter notwithstanding, carried the largest proportion of supplies from the Western Hemisphere in any protocol period yet — 2,079,320 tons or 56.6 per cent of the total in 1945 alone.[3] The air route from Alaska to Siberia meanwhile handled almost all the aircraft from the United States with unprecedented ease.[4] From January 1945 onwards also the Black Sea was open to shipments from the United States. Although this came about only after some delay resulting from Soviet organization and reticence to accept U.S. personnel in Odessa, this route soon supplanted the Persian Gulf.[5]

More important, from the British point of view, convoys to north Russia were run regularly from August 1944 to May 1945. The problems of this route in the past, though still occasionally troublesome, were by now generally insignificant. The Soviet Trade Delegation showed an unprecedented eagerness to co-operate with London. 'They appear', said a member of the Ministry of War Transport in January 1945, 'to have come to the conclusion that their interests are better served by working in co-operation with us and the happy happy (sic) position is un-likely to be disturbed except

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 691.
2 Ibid., pp. 692-3.
3 Motter, The Persian Corridor, appendix A.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 679.
5 Ibid., pp. 680-1.

by the intervention of Moscow'.[1] At the same time relations in the northern ports of the Soviet Union remained reasonably amicable. Though there were still cases of British seamen being arrested and imprisoned for minor offences,[2] the British government no longer made a major issue of these. Its attitude was perhaps best summarized by Churchill in March 1944 when Eden suggested sending a forthright telegram on the matter to Stalin.

> Alas, I cannot send such a telegram. It would only embroil me with Bruin on a small point when so many large ones are looming up. He would only send an insulting, argumentative answer. In my opinion questions should be asked in Parliament about this . . .[3]

In these circumstances the only obstacles remaining to impede the northern convoys in 1944 and 1945 were the savage Arctic weather and the continuing strain on escorts.

For even at this relatively late stage of the war, the Arctic convoys clashed with other operational requirements. The presence of the Tirpitz at Altenfjord until its sinking in November 1944 and the activity of two German submarine flotillas in northern Norway necessitated strong escorts for the convoys to north Russia.[4] The Admiralty therefore would not run them at the same time as 'Overlord'.[5] Under pressure from the Americans and Russians it agreed to resume sailings in August 1944,[6] but it then resisted later pressure for a shortening of the convoy cycle. In November the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who provided the majority of the vessels for the northern convoys (approximately 27 per convoy to 3 from the British),[7] suggested that the cycle be reduced from 35 to 21 days. This, they rightly believed, would economize on shipping.[8] The Admiralty, however, though eager to conserve shipping, was concerned also with the developing threat from U-boats in Home Waters.[9] It would agree

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1 Notes by F. H. Keenlyside on British Shipping Policy and the U.S.S.R. 22 Jan. 1945, MT 59/1669.
2 Minute by FS to PM, PM(44)107, 28 Feb. 1944, ADM 205/35; SBNO, Murmansk, to SBNO, N. Russia, repeated, Admy, 221245A/Feb., 22 Feb. 1945, FO 371 47926 N2148/652/38.
3 PM to FS, M.207/4, 2 Mar. 1944, ADM 205/35. In fact questions were later asked in Parliament about a seaman serving a sentence in the Soviet Union: see Parliamentary Debates, vol. 410, columns 413, 2437-8.
4 S. W. Roskill, A Merchant Fleet at War (London, 1962), p. 305; C-in-C Home Fleet to Admy, 13215B/July, 14 July 1944, MT 59/1123.
5 COS(44)175th mtg(O), min. 10, 30 May 1944, CAB 79/75.
6 Leighton and Coakley, p. 679.
7 ASE(44)2nd mtg, 15 June 1944, FO 371 43276 N3523/25/38.
8 Tel. from JSM, W'ton, JSM 473, 28 Dec. 1944, MT 59/1125.
9 Note for COS mtg of 22 Jan. 1945, WO 193/669.

only to a convoy cycle of thirty days after January 1945;[1] and in fact, soon after this, it argued for the cessation of the northern convoys altogether in favour of the Black Sea route.[2] This the United States opposed, fearing Japanese interference in the future with the supply route across the Pacific.[3] The Foreign Office also favoured continuing with the northern convoys as a bargaining counter in the financial negotiations with the Kremlin.[4] Sailings to north Russia therefore continued until the cessation of all trade convoys late in May 1945.[5] The northern route carried 23.4 per cent of supplies from the Western Hemisphere in 1944 and 19.8 per cent in 1945.[6]

Through this the northern convoys contributed to the situation where it proved possible late in 1944 to run down the route through Iran. This the Western governments were eager to do for a variety of reasons — to conserve shipping,[7] to redeploy the large number of U.S. personnel operating the route[8] and to deprive the Soviet Union of any pretext for keeping its troops in the northern zone of occupation in Iran.[9] From the earliest days of intervention in that country the Russians had shown their intention of making political capital of their presence there.[10] They had encouraged separatist movements,[11] disseminated propaganda[12] and undermined the authority of the central government.[13] Although this campaign had been subdued for most of 1942 and 1943, it had become more intense in 1944, possibly, the British Consul-General at Meshed believed, because Stalin, on visiting Teheran for the three-power conference late in 1943, had realized with alarm the extent of U.S. influence there.[14] By autumn 1944 the Soviet Union's interference in Iranian

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1 COS(45)59(O), 20 Jan. 1945, CAB 80/91.
2 COS(45)79th mtg, min. 14, 28 Mar. 1945, WO 193/669.
3 Earl of Halifax, no. 44 MOSSY, 24 Apr. 1945, FO 371 47834 N107/1/38.
4 Note on COS(45)343(O) mtg, 17 May 1945, WO 193/669.
5 Minute, 26 May 1945, MT 59/1127.
6 Motter, appendix A.
7 COS(44)340th mtg(O), 11 Oct. 1944, CAB 79/81.
8 Ibid.
9 ASE(44)60, 15 Dec. 1944, CAB 92/8.
10 Tel. from Sir R. Bullard (ambassador, Teheran), no. 923, 5 Oct. 1941, FO 371 27233 E6355/3444/34.
11 See A. Fontaine History of the Cold War (New York, 1968-9), pp. 279 ff; H. Feis, From Trust to Terror The Onset of the Cold War 1945-1950 (New York, 1970), p. 64.
12 Tel. from British Consul, Meshed, 12638/G, 7 Sept. 1941, WO 193/662; C-in-C India to WO, VVY/1057/Cipher, 17 Jan. 1942, WO 193/159.
13 Memorandum by FO, 19 Jan. 1945, annex to COS(45)25(O), CAB 80/90.
14 Skrine, World War in Iran, pp. 149, 185.

politics had reached alarming proportions. From September to November it sought to secure for itself exclusive rights to petroleum and mineral exploration in northern Iran, using such a forceful press campaign in pursuit of this that the Iranian government was forced to resign.[1] In these circumstances the West became concerned to minimize the use of the Persian Corridor; for then it could suggest to the Soviet government mutual withdrawal of troops engaged in the defence of the supply routes.[2]

The Nokkundi-Meshed and Basra-Kanaquin routes, being long and uneconomical, were the first to be discontinued - in July[3] and September 1944.[4] Then in November the vehicle assembly plants were closed, dismantled and eventually sent to the Soviet Union.[5] The American Command also terminated aircraft assembly operations in February 1945 in view of the almost total dependence of the United States on the Alaskan ferry route.[6] From that time onwards the Persian Corridor's role was reduced to that of clearing backlogs, supplying aviation fuel,[7] transporting raw materials from India[8] and dismantling the assembly facilities. The latter of these activities proceeded slowly, since all concerned were reluctant to relinquish the insurance of this route against the failure of others;[9] but in 1945 the Persian Gulf carried only 1.2 per cent of all supplies from the Western Hemisphere. The totals for 1943 and 1944 had been 33.5 per cent and 28.8 per cent respectively.[10] No sooner had the Persian Corridor reached its peak capacity in fact than it was rendered redundant by the other supply routes. These on their own could carry the fourth protocol commitments and more. For by the time of Germany's defeat, the British had almost completed their protocol shipments[11] and the United States was ahead of schedule not only in flight deliveries of aircraft but also in shipments on all other routes. The target of 5,700,000 short tons,

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1 Hull, Memoirs, II, pp. 1509-10; G. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran 1918-1948: a study in big-power rivalry (Cornell University Press, 1949), p. 221.
2 ASE(44)60, 15 Dec. 1944, CAB 92/8.
3 ASE to W'ton, no. 116 MOSSY, 29 July 1944, FO 371 43276 N4125/25/38.
4 Memo by Foy to secretary, COS committee, 6 Sept. 1944, BT 28/144, SEC/12/17.
5 Motter, pp. 281-2, 328.
6 Ibid, p. 270.
7 Ibid., p. 375.
8 Memo by Hollyer (MWT), 26 Jan. 1945, MT 59/1125.
9 Leighton and Coakley, p. 681.
10 Motter, appendix A.
11 Annex to COS(45)308(O), 3 May 1945, CAB 80/94.

set with some trepidation in 1944, had been easily surpassed.[1]

This achievement did much to compensate during the fourth protocol period for the lack of consensus on financial questions. Nonetheless the fundamental disagreement between East and West on the future of Allied aid remained, and it soon emerged - only shortly after the formal signing of the fourth protocol - with the defeat of Germany. For with V-E day, 8 May 1945, the Western governments could no longer ignore the question of post-war assistance to the Soviet Union. They were forced to resolve, in some cases unilaterally, the issues which for so long had delayed the signing of the last supply programme.

In the United States no decision on these questions had been taken by the time President Roosevelt died on 12 April 1945. Nonetheless, the President had indicated that aid to the Soviet Union should continue uninterrupted after V-E day, despite the fact that the Red Army would not then be at war with Japan. On 30 September 1944, for instance, Roosevelt had informed the Secretary of State that the instructions issued three weeks earlier suspending all planning for Lend-Lease after V-E day should not apply to 'lend-lease negotiations current with the Government of the USSR'.[2] Then on 5 January 1945 he had issued his familiar directive on aid to the Soviet Union:

> Russia continues to be a major factor in achieving the defeat of Germany. We must, therefore, continue to support the U.S.S.R. by providing the maximum amount of supplies which can be delivered to her ports. I consider this a matter of utmost importance, second only to the operational requirements in the Pacific and the Atlantic.
>
> The U.S.S.R. has been requested to state requirements for a Fifth Protocol, to cover the period from July 1, 1945 to June 30, 1946. It is desired that, within the limitations of available resources, every effort be made to meet these requirements.[3]

There was a distinct lack of reality in this directive, since not even the most pessimistic estimates anticipated the continuation of the European war until mid-1946.[4] Congress, moreover, was increasingly opposed to using Lend-Lease for any purpose other than the waging of the war. In fact in its March 1945 review of the Lend-Lease appropriation, an amendment specifying that the act should not be used for post-war relief or rehabilitation had been

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1 Leighton and Coakley, p. 681.
2 Ibid., p. 694.
3 FRUS, 1945, V, p. 944.
4 Leighton and Coakley, p. 694.

only narrowly defeated.[1] These obvious anomalies, however, were not resolved by the time Harry Truman became President and the war in Europe came to an end.[2]

Then the question was solved dramatically. Only three days after V-E day Truman, on the advice of the Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew and Leo Crowley of the Foreign Economic Administration, ordered that aid to the Soviet Union should be immediately and drastically curtailed. The only exceptions to this rule were to be those supplies in Annex III of the fourth protocol which could be justified as being for use in the war against Japan, and those supplies needed to complete industrial plants of which shipment had already begun. All other supplies were to be subject to strict scrutiny. There would be no fifth protocol; supplies outstanding from the fourth would be shipped only when necessary for operations against Japan; all future offerings would be determined 'on the basis of reasonably adequate information regarding the essentiality of Soviet military supply requirements and in the light of all competing demands for supplies in the changing military situation'.[3] Rehabilitation needs, President Truman hoped, would be handled through the Export and Import Bank and the International Monetary Fund.[4]

As first interpreted by the zealous President's Soviet Protocol Committee, this order meant recalling even ships at sea to remove cargoes which were not intended for use in Europe.[5] Almost immediately, however, the impracticality of this was clear. The reaction from the Soviet Union, and also from Britain who was more severely affected, was extremely adverse.[6] Stalin told Harry Hopkins who visited Moscow in May in an effort to resolve the deadlock resulting from the April conference in San Francisco on post-war organization, of his disappointment. He fully understood the right of the United States to adjust the supply programme in changed circumstances, but, he said, 'what was, after all, an agreement between the two Governments had been ended in a scornful and abrupt manner.'

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1 H. S. Truman, Memoirs; Year of Decisions, vol. 1, p. 98.
2 Leighton and Coakley, p. 694.
3 Ibid., p. 695.
4 Truman, p. 98.
5 Leighton and Coakley, p. 695.
6 The British Commonwealth received during the war $30,073 million worth of Lend-Lease supplies from the United States out of a total $43,615 million. The Soviet Union received $10,670 million (W. K. Hancock and M. M. Gowing, British War Economy, London: HMSO, 1949, p. 375).

> He said that if proper warning had been given to the Soviet Government there would have been no feeling of the kind he had spoken of; that this warning was important to them, since their economy was based on plans . . . they had intended to make a suitable expression of gratitude to the United States for the Lend-Lease assistance during the war, but the way in which this programme had been halted now made that impossible to do.[1]

Truman, who claimed later not to have read Grew's memorandum before signing it, quickly rescinded the order terminating Lend-Lease.[2] In the following days, U.S. policy was revised to allow all Pacific shipments of protocol supplies to the Soviet Union to continue; 90 per cent of these in any case were approved programmes of supplies for the war against Japan. Atlantic, Black Sea and Persian Gulf shipments, however, still remained suspended. Despite this, the immediate impact of the new policy on supplies to the Soviet Union was limited. Given the size of the Pacific supply programme, shipments in May 1945 were in fact the largest of any month in the war.[3] On 12 May, moreover, the Chargé of the Soviet Union in Washington was assured by the Acting Secretary of State that

> It is the desire of this Government to continue to provide the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with assistance in meeting its military needs for such supplies as are required in the light of war conditions . . . It is urgent that you furnish this Government . . . a statement of (your) military requirements . . . for all categories of lend-lease supplies for the remainder of the calendar year 1945 and adequate information regarding the essentiality of these requirements in the light of the new military situation.[4]

In response to this the Soviet Union submitted new requests for military aid on 28 May for the period 1 July to 31 December 1945. Although, as Grew's letter to the Soviet authorities shows, the United States intended to subject these demands to closer scrutiny than in the past, many of them were eventually approved. It proved impossible for either General Deane in Moscow or the administration in Washington to extract detailed justification from the Russians. Those requests which were considered reasonable for the war against Japan were therefore supplied in quantities sufficient to fill the Soviet Pacific fleet in July and August.

By early August these supplies and most of the 'Milepost'

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1 Sherwood, The White House papers, vol. 2, p. 885.
2 Truman, p. 228.
3 Leighton and Coakley, p. 696.
4 FRUS, 1945, V, pp. 1000-1.

programme had been shipped, but the dilemma as to what the United States should then do, was resolved by the sudden end to the Japanese war. On 6 August 1945 the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; on 8 August the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, and six days after this, the Japanese government sued for peace. President Truman therefore announced on 17 August that aid to the Soviet Union under Lend-Lease would cease on V-J day. Only those supplies which were already on the seas would be allowed to proceed. Thus it was that aid to the Soviet Union from the United States of America finally came to an end.[1]

In the meantime the two other Western signatories to the fourth protocol had been trying with similar lack of success to terminate their aid programmes amicably. The Canadians, like the Americans, had asked in February 1945 for the Soviet Union's needs during a fifth protocol period,[2] and with the arrival of V-E day they too suspended all shipments under Mutual Aid.[3] Within two months they had decided to ship the raw materials, food and military items outstanding from the fourth protocol, but all industrial equipment they made subject to new conditions of payment.[4] Britain on the other hand had stalled even on the question of a fifth protocol. Hoping that this would be made irrelevant by an early end to the war[5] they had discussed the question very little. All that had been decided with any clarity by the time of Germany's surrender was that the Air Ministry opposed any further allocations of aircraft. Britain and the United States had both reduced their aircraft construction programmes in anticipation of the end of the war[6] and this, combined with manpower shortages, Sinclair said on 8 April 1945, made it impossible to supply new fighters to the Soviet Union.[7] The Chiefs of Staff sympathized. Discussing the need for shipping in the Far Eastern war and the supply of liberated territories, they told the Prime Minister on 3 May that there was 'no longer any military need to continue supplies to Russia'.[8]

The end of the war in Europe hardened attitudes in London further.

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1 Leighton and Coakley, pp. 696-9.
2 Earl of Halifax, no. 19 MOSSY, 9 Feb. 1945, FO 371 47834 N107/1/38.
3 Canada (H.C.)(High Commission) to D.O., no. 1144, 21 May 1945, FO 371 47840 N5721/1/38.
4 ASE(45)28, 16 July 1945, FO 371 47842 N8764/1/38.
5 Minute by Mr. Galsworthy (FO), 17 Feb. 1945, FO 371 47836 N1661/1/38.
6 Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 452.
7 ASE(45)11, CAB 92/9.
8 COS(45)308(O), annex, CAB 80/94.

For one thing the British were shocked themselves at the unilateral decision of the U.S. government to terminate Lend-Lease aid. Truman's intention to supply goods only for the war against Japan cut through the Keynes-Morgenthau agreement of late 1944 and the decisions of the Quebec conference even earlier.[1] The Prime Minister sought assurances from the President late in May that Britain's needs would still be met under Lend-Lease, but no answer to this appeal was received until the three-power conference at Potsdam some seven weeks later. In the interim the United Kingdom received only 20 per cent of the assignments it required for the Far Eastern war.[2]

Inevitably in these circumstances the British attitude to supplying the Soviet Union was not generous — particularly as the Russians continued to be obstructive about payments towards their existing debts. Although on 2 June 1945 the Soviet government accepted the 2.4% interest rate which the Treasury had offered nine months earlier for any post-war credit, it qualified its acceptance by asking that this interest rate be extended to all future payments on the £60 million credit already advanced.[3] Furthermore the Russians continued in mid-1945 to delay payment for some millions of pounds worth of civil supplies; they disputed as well freight charges which had been levied for the transport of these supplies in British ships. (Under the terms of the 1942 financial agreement the Soviet government had undertaken to pay for the carriage of civil supplies, but not for military supplies or for empty space in any vessel.)[4] To add to these problems the Soviet Union objected to paying the $33 million owing to the United Kingdom for aircraft which it had supplied from the United States. The 1942 agreement again had stipulated that such munitions must be paid for in dollars, and that this applied retrospectively, but in 1944 and 1945 the Russians excluded from their liabilities those Tomahawks fighters which had been provided in the earliest days of their military crisis in 1941.[5]

In face of this Churchill accepted the recommendation of his civil and military advisers[6] that military supplies to the Soviet

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1 Sayers, Financial Policy, p. 477.
2 Duncan Hall, p. 456.
3 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 47 MOSSY, 2 June 1945, FO 371 47840 N6734/1/38.
4 ASE(45)15, 17 May 1945, CAB 92/9.
5 Mtg at People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade between the ambassador and Mikoyan, 13 June 1945, FO 371 47841 N7551/1/38.
6 Draft minute from Minister of Production to PM, 29 May 1945, FO 371 47840 N6254/1/38; ASE(45)22, 1 June 1945, CAB 92/9.

Union should be halted from mid-June onwards. He ruled on 13 June 1945 that there should be no fifth protocol and that civil supplies, even if undelivered against the fourth protocol, should be withheld until the Kremlin had settled back payments.[1] Clark Kerr thought this an 'unduly aggressive move',[2] but in reality it was tempered by the fact that the Minister of Production requested the Soviet Trade Delegation at the same time to state Soviet military needs for the rest of 1945. These needs, he said, would be met again under the terms of the 1942 agreement.[3] Furthermore, even though Lyttelton stressed, as had the Americans, that Soviet requests must be accompanied by 'adequate information regarding the essentiality of these requirements in the light of the changed war situation',[4] the impact of this on supply procedures was limited. Russian requests for the rest of 1945 proved to be little more than the remainder of the fourth protocol military supplies and some non-protocol requests which had either been under consideration or authorized for some time. The A.S.E. therefore did not insist on detailed information.[5]

Nonetheless agreement on civil supply disputes remained elusive. In August the new Labour government attempted to settle them anew. Eager to maintain trade with the Soviet Union, particularly in timber[6] and the equipment ordered to Russian specifications,[7] it offered on 7 August to resume shipments of civil supplies if the Soviet Trade Delegation settled the terms of contract for goods already shipped, those awaiting shipment and those for which invoices had been already presented. The Russians were assured that this offer was made 'in a spirit of mutual confidence and good will' and as evidence of this the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade was invited to London for discussions.[8] The Soviet representatives

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1 War Cabinet Offices to W'ton, no. 15 MOSSY NOCOP, 13 June 1945, FO 371 47841 N6998/1/38.
2 Sir A. Clark Kerr, no. 61 MOSSY, 10 Aug. 1945, FO 371 47844 N12159/1/38.
3 ASE(45)23, 18 June 1945, CAB 92/9.
4 Ibid.
5 ASE(45)27, 16 July 1945, CAB 92/9. Lyttelton also agreed on 29 June, at the specific request of Borisenko, to exclude rubber from the order suspending shipment of civil supplies (ASE(45)32, 22 Aug. 1945, FO 371 47843 N10893/1/38).
6 Anonymous memo, 6 Sept. 1945, BT 28/144, SEC/12/20.
7 Letter from J. P. Peek, secretary of A.S.E., to Mr. Davidson, Treasury, 11 Aug. 1945, MT 59/1128.
8 War Cabinet Offices to Moscow, no. 54 MOSSY, 15 Aug. 1945, FO 371 47835 N670/1/38.

accepted this compromise;[1] but, although several issues were settled in the following month, the dispute continued over the prices of some £40-60 million worth of goods.[2] The A.S.E. therefore decided on 18 September, shortly before its dissolution, that the Russians should be offered under the 1942 agreement only those supplies for which there was no alternative use. No further production would be undertaken to meet Soviet requirements under the agreement, no equipment would be offered if there were other uses for its components, and no supplies would be transferred if they had substantial scrap value.[3] In a final effort to extract payment from the S.T.D., the British also decided to offer discounts of 5 per cent for goods immediately purchased and a further £12-13 million credit at 2½ per cent interest should the Russians agree to settle promptly.[4]

The Soviet Union, however, apparently wanted better terms. At the end of 1945 British claims for some £11.5 million worth of civil supplies were still outstanding, as were those concerning aircraft from the United States, most of the freight charges and miscellaneous expenses run up on services for the Soviet Union on the Persian Gulf route.[5] Not until September 1946 was agreement reached which allowed the resumption of protocol shipments, and by this time the general prospects for trade had faded. The Soviet Union was in need itself of the raw materials the United Kingdom desired, and apparently it continued to believe that the credit the British had offered in 1944 was inadequate. The months passed without any approach by the Soviet government on this question and eventually the Board of Trade was forced to regard the offer as having lapsed.[6]

This was a disappointing end to an association from which the British - and presumably the Russians also - had hoped to develop a mutually advantageous commercial relationship. Nonetheless it was not a surprising end. The four supply protocols had been uniquely sacrificial on Britain's part and their generosity had sprung from the desperate military crisis of the early years of the war. When this crisis had receded and Britain's contribution to the Soviet Union had of necessity diminished, the protocols had been

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1 Ibid.
2 Cabinet Offices to Moscow, no. 18 MOSSY NOCOP, 21 Sept, 1945, FO 371 47844 N12703/1/38.
3 ASE(45)2nd mtg, 18 Sept. 1945, FO 371 47844 N12505/1/38.
4 no. 18 MOSSY NOCOP, loc. cit.
5 Note for Foreign Secretary by Board of Trade on Civil Supplies to and from Russia, 13 Dec. 1945, MT 59/1128.
6 Brief for the Foreign Secretary by the Board of Trade for use at the Moscow conference, 24 Feb. 1947, MT 59/1128.

maintained largely for political reasons. With the end of the war in Europe, however, normality was bound to return. For the United Kingdom this meant a severe economic crisis in which her capacity to help others recover from the ravages of the war was limited. Politically and commercially desirable though it was to continue aid to the Soviet Union, Britain could not afford to be generous.

Unfortunately, as far as can be seen, the Soviet Union could not appreciate this. Its ignorance of the United Kingdom's economic situation seemed extensive. The Soviet Trade Delegation argued late in 1944 that Britain should default on her obligations to India and the Dominions for the sake of the Soviet Union. These countries, the Russians argued, were in the same relation to the British government as the Ukraine to the Soviet and should be ordered to do as Britain wished.[1] To add to this it seemed that the Soviet Union saw post-war assistance as its right. With some justice it believed it had won the war. Certainly it had destroyed the mass of the German army and had, more than any country in the West, paid the price for the defeat of Nazism with the lives of its people and the devastation of its land. For this, it apparently believed in 1945, the supply protocols and the terms of credit it demanded for trading relations after the war were simply just and adequate recompense.[2]

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1 Memorandum by Mr. Wilson, 9 Nov. 1944, FO 371 43355 N7076/302/38.

2 See, for example, Harriman's telegram to Hopkins on 10 Sept. 1944 describing the hardening of the Soviet Union's attitude at that time: 'The general attitude seems to be that it is our obligation to help Russia and accept her policies because she has won the war for us.' (FRUS, 1944, IV, p. 989).

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In the years since World War II the story of Allied supplies to the Soviet Union has become distorted and surrounded by half-truths. Like the map of Europe it has been changed by the hostility of the Cold War, and the events of 1941 to 1945 have been blurred by the prejudices of later years. The Soviet Union, retreating behind its 'iron curtain', has disparaged the contribution of the Western Powers to the winning of the war; it has claimed for itself sole credit for the defeat of Germany, and has accused the West of deliberately delaying the second front in an effort to weaken the Soviet Union.[1] The Western countries on the other hand have charged the Russians with ingratitude for Allied help;[2] they have stressed the cost to themselves of fulfilling the supply protocols, and have even in some cases claimed more credit for Soviet recovery than the scale of their assistance warranted. Given these conflicting claims, it is a difficult task to assess the true value and cost of the Soviet supply programme. Even with the hindsight of twenty years, it is not easy to answer the questions: What did it cost Great Britain to supply the Soviet Union? What did it avail the Soviet Union to receive these supplies?

The first of these questions is obviously the easier to answer. The British government, like the American, published after the war statistics of the aid it offered, and these show the cost - at least in numbers - of the commitment to the Russians. From 1 October 1941 to 31 March 1946 the British made available the following supplies:

5,218	tanks (of which 1,388 from Canada)
7,411	aircraft (of which 3,129 from U.S.A.)
4,932	antitank guns
4,005	rifles and machine guns
1,803	sets of radar equipment
4,338	sets of radio equipment
2,000	telephone sets
473,000,000	projectiles
9	MTBs
4	submarines
14	minesweepers

Total value £308,000,000

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1 See, for example, J. Erickson, 'The Soviet Union at War (1941-1945)' Soviet Studies, vol. XIV (1962-3), no. 3, p. 268; M. P. Gallagher, The Soviet History of World War II: Myths, Memories and Realities (New York, 1963), pp. 45ff.

2 See, for example, General Sir Leslie Hollis, One Marine's Tale (London, 1956), p. 78. Hollis was Senior Assistant Secretary (Military) to War Cabinet.

Raw materials, foodstuffs, machinery, industrial plant, medical supplies and hospital equipment to the value of

£120,000,000 [1]

The United States meanwhile provided between 11 March 1941 and 1 October 1945 the quantities listed below:

14,795	aircraft (67 per cent fighters, 26 per cent bombers, 7 per cent miscellaneous)
7,537	tanks (including 5,797 medium)
51,503	jeeps
35,170	motorcycles
8,701	tractors
375,883	trucks
8,218	antiaircraft guns
131,633	submachine guns
345,735	tons of explosives
1,981	locomotives
11,155	flatcars and wagons
540,000	tons of rails
Over 1,050,000	miles of field telephone cable
Food shipments to the value of $1,312,000,000	
2,670,000	tons of gasoline
842,000	tons of chemicals
3,786,000	tires
49,000	tons of leather
15,000,000	pairs of boots

Total value $11,260,343,603 [2]

From a combined war production of 427,447 aircraft and 111,600 tanks, therefore,[3] Britain, Canada and the United States sent a total of 22,206 aircraft and 12,755 tanks to the Soviet Union.

These numbers may not seem large as a proportion of Allied resources; but statistics do not reveal the whole picture. In Britain's case the cost of supplying the Soviet Union was much greater than the figures suggest, since not only did she sacrifice her own munitions, but she lost incalculable quantities of aid from the United States. These diversions, moreover, occurred in categories, such as light bombers and tanks, where Britain relied greatly on American production.[4] They were also concentrated - in the case of tanks particularly - in the years 1941 and 1942. This was the

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1 Statement by Prime Minister in House of Commons, 16 April 1946, and 3rd report on Mutual Aid, 1946, quoted in Mitchell, A History of Russian . . . Sea Power, p. 427.

2 Information from Lend-Lease reports 19, 20, 21 and 22 to U.S. Congress, quoted ibid. Lend-Lease aid to Britain, by comparison, was $30,073 in the years 1941-5 (Duncan Hall, North American Supply, p. 430).

3 Duncan Hall, pp. 424-6. The figure for tanks does not include Bren carriers, other tracked and armoured carriers, scout cars and armoured cars.

4 Late in 1942 Britain relied on the United States for 68 per cent of her light bombers and G.R. planes, 100 per cent of her transport aircraft, and 50-57 per cent of her tanks (Duncan Hall, p. 391).

time when Britain's military crisis was still intense and the output of U.S. industry was comparatively low. Although Lend-Lease assistance to the British empire reached $9,031,000,000 and $10,766,000,000 in 1943 and 1944 respectively, in 1941 and 1942 it was only $1,082,000,000 and $4,757,000,000.[1] In these early years, too, Britain's offering of tanks, aircraft, aluminium and artillery to the Russians were at their highest levels, so the implications of the supply protocols were great indeed. The growth of the air forces at home and abroad,[2] the build-up of armoured forces, the development of an army support air force,[3] and the advance from a defensive to offensive role were all delayed.

So too was Britain's recovery from the ravages of the naval war. Although the provision of naval supplies to the Russians was not difficult (as shown by the exclusion of the Admiralty from the disputes of late 1941), the northern convoys remained a constant strain. Forty of them sailed in all,[4] and this involved (in the period to March 1945) some 739 ships;[5] 271 of these were British, including 55 tankers,[6] and 677 arrived - a loss-rate of 8.4 per cent. Added to this were the Royal Navy's casualties of 2 cruisers, 5 destroyers and 8 escort ships sunk, 7 destroyers and 1 aircraft carrier damaged, and 95 officers and 1,561 other ranks killed.[7] Although these losses were not great compared to those in other theatres, their impact was still keenly felt. Like the flow of supplies, the losses were concentrated in the years of weakness, 1941 and 1942, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 3 minesweepers and 1 submarine being lost by October of the latter year.[8] This drain, together with the demands on U.S. merchant shipping, meant reductions

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1 Duncan Hall, p. 430.
2 COS(41)246(O), 4 Nov. 1941, CAB 80/60.
3 Butler, Grand Strategy, vol. III, pt. II, p. 531.
4 B. B. Schofield, The Russian Convoys (London, 1964), p. 212. Schofield's figures for the northern convoys sailing and losses are slightly higher than the Admiralty's quoted by Alexander. Possibly this discrepancy occurs because Schofield's statistics cover the period after March 1945. However, the statistics given in E. Bookes, The Gates of Hell (London, 1973) p. 189, are also greater than Alexander's. Nonetheless the First Lord was addressing a luncheon in his honour when he quoted the statistics given above, and it seems reasonable to assume their accuracy.
5 Speech by A. V. Alexander, 27 March, 1945, AVAR 12/167, Churchill College.
6 Behrens, Merchant Shipping . . ., p. 265. This contains details of the number of British ships sailing each year.
7 Speech by Alexander, loc. cit.
8 Notes by A. V. Alexander for PM, 12 Oct. 1942, PREM 3 393/14. See also Morison, History of U.S. Naval Operations, vol. 1, p. 367.

in the import programme.[1] It meant also less escorts in the Atlantic at a time when the battle there was most finely balanced.[2]

Without doubt, therefore, the cost to Britain of maintaining the commitment to the Soviet Union was considerable. On land, sea and in the air the implications of the commitment were far-reaching, and the sacrifices the protocols demanded in 1941 and 1942 were great. Nonetheless, costly though these diversions of munitions were, it is not clear that they precipitated the reverses Britain suffered in 1942. It has certainly been claimed they did - Churchill in the parliamentary crisis of early 1942 ranked Soviet supplies with the Middle East as a major cause of Britain's humiliation in the Far East;[3] and he reiterated these claims in his writings after the war:

> In order to make this immense diversion (to the Soviet Union) and to forgo the growing flood of American aid without crippling our campaign in the Western Desert, we had to cramp all our preparations which prudence urged for the defence of the Malay peninsula and our Eastern Empire and possessions against the ever-growing menace of Japan.[4]

Eden, too, told Crozier on 15 January 1942 that 'the drain of the Libyan campaign and still more of the Russian campaign' had to a large degree caused the disaster in Malaya. 'The simple truth', he said, 'was that we had given to Russia what we ourselves needed here now and . . . in consequence we had not really got enough for ourselves'.[5] These claims, however, are difficult to accept uncritically, Certainly the demands of the Russians made the task of reinforcing the Far East early in 1942 agonising; but by that time the British position in Malaya was irretrievable. British forces had suffered profound defeats which owed more to their inexperience in the jungle[6] and to the neglect of the Far East in 1941 than to any

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1 See pp. 97, 123.

2 Hancock and Gowing, British War Economy, p. 413. Whereas there were 8-12 escorts for every Atlantic convoy late in 1941, in 1942 the Russian convoys and the Pacific war had reduced this to 4-6.

3 Parliamentary Debates, vol. 377, col. 606, 27 Jan. 1942, col. 1011, 29 Jan. 1942.

4 Churchill, The Second World War, III, pp. 351-2.

5 Crozier, Off the Record, pp. 266-7.

6 Lieut-General A. E. Percival, G.O.C.-in-C., Malaya, rated Japanese training, experience, discipline and morale as the main reasons for their success when he signalled London two days before the capitulation of Singapore. 'Other factors, notably air superiority and possession of tanks', he said, 'contributed to this success, but were not determining factors.' It was not until later that Percival considered the lack of munitions to have been significant in Britain's defeat (Butler, p. 419.)

commitment to the Russians.

For well before the Soviet Union even entered the war British plans for the defence of Malaya had been undermined. Ten months earlier, in August 1940, it had been agreed that Malaya would receive by the end of 1941 twenty-two R.A.F. squadrons. The Royal Navy, previously the foundation of the defence of Singapore, with the elimination of the French Fleet from the Mediterranean, was preoccupied with duties closer to home. In its absence air power was to be the basis of Malaya's defence.[1] The army, temporarily set at a strength of ten brigades, was to be progressively reduced to the role of defending airfields, base installations and vulnerable points.[2]

However, this plan was not fully implemented. In January, April and May 1941 the Prime Minister and the Defence Committee discountenanced arguments for reinforcing Malaya on the grounds that everything was needed for the Middle East.[3] The Chiefs of Staff were instructed to proceed on the assumption that war with Japan was improbable.[4] Consequently by June 1941, when the Soviet Union was attacked, the army contingent, though up to ten brigades, was weak in artillery, anti-aircraft weapons and tanks.[5] The air force, meanwhile, consisted of twelve, not twenty-two, squadrons.[6]

Even when, in July 1941, the Japanese occupied French Indo-China, making the whole Malayan peninsula vulnerable to attack,[7] British forces remained weak. This was the time to have acted, were Britain to avoid the disaster of early 1942, for inevitably there were several months' delay in the implementation of London's decisions. But few reinforcements were sent.[8] Although the Joint Planners recommended in August that 1 battleship, 4 old R-class battleships and 1 aircraft carrier should be sent to the Far East by the end of the year, only 2 capital ships and 4 destroyers were despatched.[9] Moreover, only one additional squadron of aircraft and five regiments were added to the forces in Malaya by the time the Japanese attacked.[10]

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1 J. R. M. Butler, Grand Strategy, vol. II, September 1939- June 1941 (London: HMSO, 1957), pp. 336, 333.
2 Gwyer, Grand Strategy, p. 275.
3 Butler, pp. 495, 501, 505; Gwyer, p. 280.
4 Gwyer, p. 280.
5 Ibid., p. 277.
6 Ibid., p. 19.
7 Ibid., p. 278.
8 For discussion in August about sending bomber squadrons and light tanks from the Middle East, see ibid., p. 279.
9 Ibid., p. 268.
10 Gwyer, p. 280.

Possibly Britain's preoccupation with the Soviet Union at this time inspired this neglect. Certainly they were under growing pressure to divert aircraft to the Russians and to undertake offensive action, either in Europe or the Middle East. Furthermore they had the new responsibility of the northern convoys, which made diversions from the Home Fleet undesirable. But British discussions late in 1941 suggest that the Soviet demands were not the deciding factor. Eden's, Churchill's and even Portal's statements show rather an underestimation of their Japanese opponent and a misappreciation of his intentions. Eden told Crozier on 18 July that he did not anticipate Japan wanting war with either the United States or with Britain. Their air force was not at all good, he said, and 'was described by people who should know as being "as poor as Italy's" '.[1] An appreciation by the Commanders-in-Chief, Far East and China Station, on 1 October reinforced this confidence, saying, 'we reiterate that the last thing Japan wants at this juncture is a campaign in the south . . .'.[2] Portal, too, told Sir Earle Page, special envoy of the Australian government, in November that ' . . . in the absence of extreme danger in the Far East, it was uneconomical to employ there, in a precautionary role, bombers now being used to attack targets in Germany and in the Middle East.' Churchill supported him, saying that it would be a grave strategical error to send forces to the Far East where they might remain inactive for a year.[3]

These statements, and the long neglect of Malaya, indicate that the basis of British policy in the Far East was the assumption that Japan would not act with the United States Pacific Fleet out against her.[4] A pre-emptive strike against Pearl Harbor was never seriously considered.[5] This miscalculation, together with the British desire to protect themselves at home and to reach a decision in the Middle East, governed Far Eastern policy. The commitment to the Russians late in 1941 reinforced a pattern of neglect already well established.

Similarly the commitment to the Soviet Union accentuated rather than created British weaknesses in the Middle East. Certainly in this theatre the impact of the supply protocols was great, since

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1 Crozier, pp. 228-9.
2 Gwyer, p. 281. There was always the possibility that Japan would take the opportunity to attack a weakened Soviet Union.
3 WM(41)112th concl., min. 1, confidential annex, 12 Nov. 1941, CAB 65/24.
4 Gwyer, p. 283.
5 Gwyer, pp. 282-3.

tanks and aircraft already allocated from Britain and the United States were diverted to the Russians.[1] These losses, moreover, were aggravated in 1942 when further diversions were made to the Far East. Because of these two claims on munitions, the Desert Air Force found early in 1942 that the losses of the 'Crusader' offensive of the previous year were barely replaced.[2] Furthermore, its supply of modern Hurricanes was diminished,[3] as over 1,600 of these were sent to the Red Army under the first protocol.[4] The flow of American aircraft, such as Kittyhawks and Bostons, also became unreliable.[5] Consequently by the time General Rommel attacked at Gazala on 26 May 1942 the Middle East air forces were outnumbered both in the desert and in the theatre as a whole.[6] Qualitatively too they had no fighter to match the German ME.109F.

Nonetheless it is far from clear how great was the impact of the Soviet commitment on the outcome of this desert battle. Without question armour was the deciding factor in the desert fighting, not aircraft;[7] and in this area the Middle East suffered less as a consequence of Russian demands. Crusader tanks, for instance, were never sent to the Soviet Union, and the diversion of infantry tanks late in 1941 was quickly offset by the U.S. allocation of 350 cruiser tanks in November.[8] Middle East assignments of tanks, moreover, were carefully guarded when, in January 1942, it was decided to continue supplying the Red Army despite the war in the Pacific.[9] Although Auchinleck was asked to supply one hundred tanks for the Far East, by the time Rommel attacked, the 8th Army had the 3 to 2

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1 See pp. 39, 78. See also With Prejudice, The War Memoirs of Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder, G.C.B. (London, 1966), pp. 224-5.
2 Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, vol. III, p. 205.
3 Ibid.
4 WP(42)417, 17 Sept. 1942, CAB 66/28.
5 Playfair, p. 205.
6 Ibid., p. 221.
7 Major-General I. S. O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, vol. II, "The Germans come to the Help of their Ally" (1941) (London; HMSO, 1956), p. 255.
8 See pp. 78-9.
9 See Defence Committee meeting of 30 January, at which Attlee, Sinclair and Brooke stressed that nothing must detract from the Middle East 'which is so vital', and the committee agreed that Russian allocations could be met without Middle East reductions. The United Kingdom was given lowest priority. (DO(42)5th mtg, PREM 3 150/4). In July 1942, too, Beaverbrook insisted in the House of Lords that Libya had never suffered a shortage of tanks because of the Soviet commitment. (See Coates, A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, p. 724.)

superiority considered necessary for a successful offensive;[1] 575 cruiser and light tanks and 276 infantry tanks confronted 320 German and 240 Italian tanks.[2]

The real source of British weakness, as events of June and July showed, lay not in the quantity but in the quality of their forces. Tank warfare in the flat, open Western Desert placed a premium on tactics, gun range, reliability and fire-power. In all these the Afrika Corps was superior. British tanks were unreliable and inadequately armed, and most lacked the capped ammunition necessary to pierce the face-hardened frontal armour of many German tanks.[3] The six-pounder gun did not see service in any numbers until the summer of 1942, shortly before the battle of El Alamein, and Rommel exploited this advantage, using with imagination the effective 5cm Pak 38 anti-tank gun and the 8.8cm Flak anti-aircraft gun in an anti-tank role.[4] Furthermore the 8th Army was hampered by poor leadership and inadequate co-ordination at the command level.[5] All these weaknesses combined to produce the stunning retreat to El Alamein in June 1942. Whether this disaster would have been avoided if the 8th Army, armed with those tanks which were sent instead to the Soviet Union, had taken the offensive earlier, is a difficult question.[6] It is certainly significant that Rommel's forces were reinforced during the lull in the spring of 1942 with many tanks with face-hardened armour.[7] But on the other hand, the German general's proven ability to defeat superior forces suggests that until the Desert Army was equipped with better quality equipment, it would continue to be outmatched.

In the final analysis, therefore, the cost to Britain of supplying the Soviet Union with munitions remains unclear. Without doubt, as a result of the Russian commitment programmes of expansion in almost every area of British operations were restricted, and risks were taken both on the political[8] and military levels. In 1941 and

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1 Playfair, p. 198.
2 Butler, Grand Strategy, vol. III, pt. II, p. 601.
3 Playfair, III, pp. 214, 243.
4 Ellis and Chamberlain, Fighting Vehicles, p. 60. Only 112 six-pounder anti-tank guns had arrived in May 1942 (Playfair, III, p. 215).
5 Butler, p. 602.
6 It is also a rather hypothetical question. Had the British not sent tanks to the Soviet Union, they might have retained them in the United Kingdom or sent them to India or the Dominions.
7 Playfair, III, p. 214.
8 For instance, in the curtailing of supplies to India in 1941, and in the potential alienation of Turkey, a country which loomed large in British strategy until late 1943 and which viewed the Soviet Union's resurgence with grave suspicion.

1942 particularly Britain reduced her own offensive power. But such was the complexity of the war and so manifold the choices open to the British and American governments that the final effect of these sacrifices on British operations must remain a matter of conjecture.

Similarly it is difficult to know with certainty the degree to which British munitions assisted the Red Army. The accounts which Soviet writers have published in English since the war have been confusingly contradictory. Some have admitted the relative importance of Western munitions, but others, usually those writing in earlier years, have scarcely acknowledged Allied aid. In 1946, as relations between East and West began to sour, the mention of the Allies was dropped from the Victory Day Order of the Day in Moscow. In the following year the celebration of the German surrender to the Allies on 8 May 1945 was also dropped, leaving only 9 May to be commemorated, the day of the surrender in Berlin at which Soviet representatives were present. From 1947 onwards the Soviet denigration of the West intensified, culminating finally in the claim that the Allies had prolonged the war in an effort to exhaust the Soviet Union.[1]

Inevitably in this campaign Allied aid came to be disparaged too. The account in 1948 by the head of the Soviet State Planning Commission, N. A. Voznesensky, of the Soviet economy during World War II minimized the assistance received from the West. It claimed that Allied aid amounted in 1941, 1942 and 1943 to only 4 per cent of the Soviet Union's total production. This statistic was obviously of limited value, since 1941 saw few deliveries and 1944, a year not included, saw the peak of Lend-Lease aid.[2] Furthermore, Voznesensky did not state whether his statistics were based on monetary or physical indices.[3] Instead he asserted that it was the virtues of the Soviet system which had ensured the Soviet Union's salvation.

> Staunchly and courageously enduring the privations of war, the working class, the collective farm peasantry, and the Soviet intelligentsia built up by their patriotic labor a stable war economy and kept our Soviet army and navy adequately supplied with first-class armaments, food, equipment and fuel.[4]

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1 Gallagher, p. 45.
2 Werth, Russia at War, pp. 568-9.
3 W. H. MacNeill, America, Britain & Russia. Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-1946 (Oxford, 1953), p. 231.
4 Soviet Economy During the Second World War (U.S.A.: International Publishers, 1949 (1948)), p. 11.

Other Soviet accounts have been little more helpful. Vasili Chuikov, Marshal of the Red Army and hero of Stalingrad, repeated in his reminisences the claim that the Allies had supplied aid amounting to only 4 per cent of Soviet production. Moreover, he added, the weapons the West had provided had been obsolete and 'frequently of different varieties'. Scornfully he concluded that

> In order to give an inflated impression of the part played by the United States in the defeat of the German armies, and to belittle the importance of the efforts of the U.S.S.R., the political and military leaders of the imperialist countries are trying to exaggerate the scale of deliveries of war material and weapons by the United States and Britain during the war under lend-lease, and put forward the utterly nonsensical idea that without a constant stream of British and American deliveries the Russians armies would not have been victorious.[1]

This tradition of scorning Western aid was continued by Rear-Admiral Arseni Golovko, war-time commander of the Soviet Northern Fleet. His account in 1965 of the running of the northern convoys was particularly partisan, even accusing the British of unnecessarily sinking ships when only the slightest damage had been sustained.[2] Golovko, however, was surpassed in falsification by an earlier Soviet publication which incredibly described the tragic PQ 17 as follows:

> In June-July, 1942, . . . a large number of transport ships coming to the U.S.S.R. were sunk. This happened because the English naval command intentionally divulged the time of departure of the convoy and the route it would follow, making this top-secret data available to the German fascists command. The ruling circles of the U.S.A. and England used the destruction of these transports to 'prove' that dangers connected with the shipment of goods to the U.S.S.R. were too great and on this pretext curtailed the already miserable supplies.[3]

Even the official History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union perpetrated such distortions. Written under Party surveillance and published in the early 1960s, it admitted grudgingly that there were some Western aircraft in the Soviet army; but, it added, the Hurricanes and Tomahawks were obsolete and much inferior to Russian and German fighters. The Airacobras and Kittyhawks, on the other hand, were excellent, 'but there weren't enough of them'. Of Allied tanks the History was more disparaging:

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1 The Beginning of the Road (London, 1963 (1959)), pp. 369, 368.
2 With the Red Fleet (London, 1965), p. 90.
3 A publication of 1953, quoted in Gallagher, pp. 50-1.

55 per cent of those received in 1942, it claimed, were light tanks, while in the following year the proportion of these types was even higher. The quantities received were 'mediocre' and the quality left much to be desired.[1]

Only in later years did more complimentary accounts of Allied aid emerge from the Soviet Union. In 1971 the reminiscences of Nitkita Khrushchev were published in the West, and these, in a predictable attempt to denigrate Stalin, praised the aid the West had offered. The value of Allied food, steel, aluminium and motorized transport was particularly stressed. 'Just imagine how we would have advanced from Stalingrad to Berlin without them!', Khrushchev said, referring to American cars and trucks. 'Our losses would have been colossal because we would have had no maneuverability.'[2] This conclusion was supported in 1971 by the great Soviet Marshal G. K. Zhukov. In his memoirs he admitted that some 400,000 vehicles and locomotives had been received from the West,[3] as well as valuable quantities of fuel and communications equipment. Furthermore 18,700 aircraft, 10,800 tanks and 9,600 artillery pieces were supplied under Lend-Lease. These munitions, Zhukov stated, amounted to 12 per cent, 10.4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively of the total supplied to the Red Army during the war. Allied assistance, he concluded, was of definite, but not decisive, importance to the Soviet war effort.[4]

This, of the Soviet accounts listed here, is possibly closest to the truth. Zhukov's figures are reasonably accurate, and other evidence, from Western observers and the Soviet sources,[5] has corroborated his claims. Stalin in his election speech of 1946 admitted that the Soviet Union produced some 100,000 tanks, 120,000 planes, 360,000 guns and over 1.2 million machine-guns in the last three years of the war. From these figures Alexander Werth concluded that Allied heavy equipment amounted to between 10 and 15 per cent of the total available to Soviet forces.[6] Personal observation also convinced Werth that, as Zhukov said, Allied motorized equipment

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1 Quoted in Werth, pp. 564-5.
2 Khrushchev Remembers (translated by S. Talbott) (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1971), p. 199.
3 General Deane in The Strange Alliance gave the figure of 427,284 trucks (p.93); but compare with figures shown on p. 250.
4 The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov (London, 1971), p. 684.
5 Both A. Seaton (The Russo-German War, p. 589) and G. Kolko (The Politics of War. The World and United States Foreign Policy 1943-1945, New York, 1968, p. 19) state that Soviet authorities now admit a more generous figure - of approximately 10 per cent - for Allied aid.
6 Russia At War, p. 568.

- and Western food - played an important part from 1943 onwards in the Soviet Union's war effort.[1]

Other Allied observers have confirmed this. The Canadian military attaché, Brigadier H. Lefebvre, visiting the Ukrainian front in April 1944, saw many Ford, Chevrolet and Dodge lorries, as well as Willys jeeps, in Red Army units. Allied equipment, he concluded, played 'a most important role in Russian transport'.[2] Deane of the American military mission agreed. From his observations and trips to the Russian front he estimated that lorries and combat vehicles, petroleum products, food and railway equipment, in that order, were the most valuable of Allied supplies. Like Lefebvre, he testified also that American trucks were immensely popular with Soviet troops.[3]

These conclusions were not Western propaganda. Analysis of the fighting on the Eastern front shows that in 1944 the Red Army infantry gained unprecedented mobility in its struggle with the Wehrmacht.[4] Since the Soviet motor industry was meagre - only 800,000 vehicles were present in the whole country at the beginning of the war[5] - such mobility must have been provided by the United States. Indeed, according to Seaton, the total holdings of the Soviet armed forces in 1945 were 665,000 motor vehicles.[6] The United States, it will be recalled, provided 51,503 jeeps, 35,170 motorcycles and 375,883 trucks in the years 1941-1945.

American food also must have been important to the Soviet war effort. By 1942 only 58 per cent of the area under the cultivation in the Soviet Union before the war was in Russian hands. Even after Stalingrad the percentage rose to a mere 63 per cent, and the number of cattle, horses and pigs was even less.[7] In these circumstances the versatile SPAM and other products like it from the United States must have been invaluable.[8] So too must have been Allied fuel, which included blending agents and high octane fuels not available in the Soviet Union and vital to the production of aviation gas.[9]

Food, transport and fuel, however, were essentially American supplies. Britain's military contribution consisted more of aircraft,

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1 Ibid., p. 566.
2 FO 371 43362 N3983/477/38.
3 The Strange Alliance, pp. 94-5.
4 Liddell Hart, History of the Second World War, p. 607.
5 Werth, p. 143.
6 Seaton, p. 589.
7 Werth, p. 566.
8 For two reports supporting this see Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, III, p. 566.
9 Seaton, p. 589.

tanks, naval equipment and, in the first year, artillery. The value of these supplies is more difficult to assess. There can be little doubt that in quantity and at times in quality British munitions disappointed the Russians. The number of tanks and aircraft was usually less than desired and their delivery was interrupted at the most critical times of the Eastern campaign. Moreover, if Soviet complaints are to be believed, the value of these supplies was reduced in 1941 and 1942 by the shortage of spare parts. The quality of British aircraft and artillery also provoked complaint. In later years when Soviet production of guns, tanks and aircraft was adequate to meet the Red Army's needs,[1] the Matilda tank, the two-pounder gun, and the Hurricane fighter failed to please the Russians. Indeed, according to Lieutenant-General Burrows, head of the no. 30 Military Mission in 1944, the Soviet authorities were convinced by that time that Britain gave only 'stuff which we would otherwise have had to dump in the North Sea'.[2]

Nonetheless, despite the element of truth in Soviet complaints, British munitions had their role to play. Obsolescent they may have been in 1943, but in previous years they had been equal or superior to their Soviet counterparts.[3] Moreover, they filled a gaping hole in the Red Army's resources. Soviet losses in the first year of the war were immense. In the first five months alone the Germans destroyed or captured more than 5,000 aircraft,[4] more than 300 ammunition plants,[5] 57 per cent of Soviet pre-war coal production, 68 per cent of pig iron capacity, 58 per cent of steel resources, and 60 per cent of aluminium production.[6] Even in 1945 the Russians were producing 10 per cent less electric power, 40 per cent less pig iron, 37.7 per cent less petrol and 10 per cent less coal than in 1940.[7] In these circumstances British munitions and supplies, whatever their quantity, must have been a help. 2,974 tanks and 3,000 aircraft had been despatched by the end of 1942, enough with the American contribution to arm 32 armoured divisions and 400

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1 Werth, pp. 564-5.
2 Final Report, 19 Dec. 1944, FO 371 43291 N8050/25/38.
3 Seaton, p. 589. The Valentine and Matilda, though inferior to the T-34 were superior to the T-60 and other types of Soviet tanks being produced in quantity in the middle years of the war.
4 Erickson, The Soviet High Command, p. 615.
5 Ibid., p. 616.
6 Ibid., p. 628.
7 Ibid., p. 665.

squadrons,[1] and contemporary reports confirm that they were rushed quickly to the front.[2] Like Allied raw materials, they may not have been decisive in the struggle in the East; certainly they did not, as a recent historian has claimed,[3] turned the tide before Moscow in 1941. But without these protocol supplies the Soviet defence would have been weakened, and the stunning victories of 1943 and 1944 would have been delayed.

Without the Allied commitment also the Kremlin's will to resist might have been shaken. Maisky stressed from the earliest days of the Eastern campaign the political importance of the British providing supplies, and there can be little doubt that the Moscow conference in 1941 encouraged the Soviet leaders. Certainly Churchill and the Cabinet saw the supply programme in political terms. Their early gestures, as is clear from their timing, were aimed at strengthening Soviet morale, while later offerings, which could often have been made with greater ease from the United States, continued to be made from Britain. The northern convoys too were run, when no longer strictly necessary, to demonstrate British support for the Soviet struggle.

The importance of this must not be overestimated. Britain's supply programme in later years was small, and the political capital gained from it was correspondingly diminished.[4] Moreover, as the American experience showed, supplies in any quantity were unable to compensate the Soviet Union for delays in the second front and to resolve the profound differences between East and West on the question of Eastern Europe. But notwithstanding this, the supply protocols definitely had a political role to play. They demonstrated to the Soviet government the willingness of the West to make sacrifices for the sake of the new alliance. They showed the acutely suspicious Russians that the bitterness of the past was forgotten, and countered to some degree the dangerous belief that the Red Army was fighting alone and bearing the burden of the war unaided. In these important ways the supply of munitions to the Soviet Union laid the basis for the alliance between East and West which ensured the destruction of Hitler and his immensely powerful Reich.

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1 Speech of Lyttelton at Newcastle on Red Army Day, 21 Feb. 1943, MT 59/1120. These figures were based on the calculations of 200 tanks per armoured division, 15-16 planes per squadron.
2 Collier to CAS, ARC 674, 6 Dec. 1941, AIR 8/1000; 30 MM to WO, MIL 1906, 9 Dec. 1941, WO 193/580.
3 Mitchell, p. 381.
4 See, for example, Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, vol. II, p. 564.

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Air Ministry papers (AIR): correspondence; records of meetings of Air Board and Air Council; Chief of Air Staff papers; Director of Plans; private office papers, including those of Sir Archibald Sinclair; unregistered papers; Ferry and Transport Commands; Royal Air Force Delegation, Washington; air missions.

Cabinet papers (CAB): January to August 1939, minutes and memoranda, Chiefs of Staff minutes and memoranda; September 1939 to 1945, Cabinet minutes and memoranda (WP, CP, WP(G) and WP(R) series); Defence Committee (Operations) minutes and memoranda; Defence Committee (Supply) minutes and memoranda; War Cabinet Committees (MISC and GEN series); Chiefs of Staff minutes and memoranda; Joint Planning committees; Combined Chiefs of Staff committees and sub-committees; War Cabinet committees on supply (Allied Supplies Executive, British Supply Council in North America, Munitions Assignment Board); international conferences; War Cabinet telegrams; Prime Minister's correspondence, official, operational and confidential papers.

Foreign Office (FO): general correspondence 1939-1945; embassy and consular archives Russia correspondence; confidential print Russia and the Soviet Union; private collections, including the papers of Lord Inverchapel (Sir Archibald Clark Kerr).

Ministry of Aircraft Production (AVIA): files. Private office papers were not relevant.

Ministry of Information (INFO): files of correspondence.

Ministry of Production (BT): correspondence and papers; Minister's private office papers, including Captain Oliver Lyttelton's visits to Washington.

Ministry of Supply (AVIA, WO): private office papers; unregistered papers; registered files and papers.

Ministry of War Transport (MT): shipping control and operation; private office papers.

War Office (WO): Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence; Army Council records and reports; war diaries of military mission to Moscow; military headquarters' papers (Middle East); correspondence between C.I.G.S. and General Noel Mason-Macfarlane.

(ii) Private papers

In general these were disappointing. With the exception of the Beaverbrook papers, which were of considerable assistance, these collections were either slight or not extant.

Alexander, A. V. Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge. Very few documents relating to the question of Soviet supplies or the Arctic convoys.

Balfour, Lord, of Inchrye. Diary of Moscow conference, 1941, Beaverbrook Library. Of anecdotal, rather than analytical, interest, as was Balfour's autobiography, Wings over Westminster, which he assured me in May 1974 contained all other information relevant to my research.

Beaverbrook, Lord. Papers, Beaverbrook Library. Valuable, particularly for the period of late 1941. Much of this information, however, is duplicated in the P.R.O.

Bolsover, G. (member of Moscow embassy staff, 1943-4, now Director of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London). A useful survey of Soviet press commentary in 1944.

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Cunningham, Admiral Andrew. Papers, British Museum. Disappointingly slight, particularly on the years, 1943-5, when Cunningham was First Sea Lord. A considerable proportion of papers relating to this period are closed.

Grigg, P. J. Papers, Churchill College. Slight and irrelevant.

Hart, Sir Basil Liddell. Papers, Centre for Military Archives (C.M.A.), University of London King's College. Interesting, but not numerous, perspectives.

Ismay, Lord. Papers, Centre for Military Archives. Of marginal interest only.

Margesson, D. Papers, Churchill College. Of no use.

Mason-Macfarlane, General Noel. Papers, Imperial War Museum. Slight; post-war, rather than contemporary, reminiscences.

Newall, Air Marshal Cyril. Papers, R.A.F. Museum. Of no use. Family said no other papers kept.

Pownall, Lieut-General Henry. Diaries, by kind permission of B. Bond. Interesting commentary, some of which is now published in Chief of Staff, vols. I and II.

Sinclair, Sir Archibald. Papers, Churchill College. Slight; very little on World War II. A considerable proportion of Sinclair's papers were destroyed in an air raid. The most useful of those extant were in the Air Ministry files, P.R.O.

The papers of those persons listed below were sought with the result stated.

Alanbrooke, Lord. Regrettably the papers of Lord Alanbrooke, held by the Centre for Military Archives, were not cleared for public examination in the period of my research in the United Kingdom.

Avon, the Earl of. Birmingham University is at present receiving these, but they are closed.

Burrows, General B. No papers extant.

Churchill, Sir Winston. Martin Gilbert assured me (June 1974) that all private papers, other than those held in the Prime Minister's

collection, P.R.O., were closed for at least four years. The P.R.O. confirmed this. I consulted all available PREM records in the P.R.O.

Cripps, Sir Stafford. All efforts to find papers relating to Cripps's ambassadorship in Moscow were unrewarded. Nuffield College, Oxford, referred me to Dame Isobel Cripps, who in turn referred me to M. Shock, presently writing Cripps's biography. He assured me there were no relevant papers.

Chandos, Viscount. A few papers at Churchill College, not relating to his career. Relevant information in the P.R.O. about Lyttelton's visits to Washington consulted.

Dill, Field-Marshal John. No papers available.

Gort, General Viscount. No papers available.

Ironside, Lord. Family refused access to original diaries on which The Ironside Diaries based.

Kennedy, Major-General John. Could not trace family. Hutchinson Publishing Group Ltd, publishers of The Business of War, could not help me trace the original papers.

Macready, Major-General. No papers available.

Martel, Lieut-General Giffard. Family refused access to papers.

Nye, Lieut-General Archibald. Lady Nye assured me her husband left no papers - 'to the regret of many'.

Portal, Viscount, of Hungerford. I was assured by Denis Richards, authorized by Portal's family to write his biography, that all papers in his possession were irrelevant. He referred me to the Air Ministry papers, P.R.O.

Pound, Admiral Dudley. National Maritime Museum assured me that 'a very extensive hunt' for the Pound papers had been undertaken without success. Imperial War Museum had no information.

(iii) Interviews

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